

Johannes Kepler

and

King Henry III of France

ROBERT LALONDE

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Canadian drama (English) - 21st
century

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Johannes Kepler

Dramatic characters (13)

Johannes Kepler, astronomer
 Matthäus Wackher von
 Wackenfels, court advisor
 Katharina Kepler, Johannes'
 mother
 Cristoph Kepler, Johannes'
 brother
 Caleb, Jewish money-lender
 Mustapha, Arab merchant
 Hobnot, Caleb's servant
 Cuddie, Mustapha's servant
 Ursula Reinbold, Katharina's
 neighbor
 Urban Kräutlin, surgeon, Ursula's
 brother
 Luther Einhorn, magistrate
 Johann Ulrich Aulber, magistrate
 Albrecht von Wallenstein, general
 in the imperial army

Soldiers, Jews, peasants, Arabs,
 plague-stricken men

Time: 17th century
 Places: Bohemia, Austria-Styria,
 Germanic lands

Act 1. Scene 1. A street in
 Leonberg. 1601

Enter Ursula Reinbold and Urban
 Kräutlin

Ursula. Sick to the core.

Urban. Come, sister, enter here,
 where you may find

Some remedy in hope at least.

Ursula. What, in that house of
 humbling and of mumbling? in
 that Katharina's house?

Urban. Is she not known for herbs
 and medicines

That healing suns have rarely
 beheld?

Ursula. We will see whether that
 can be revealed.

Urban. She comes at a bad time
 for your disease.

Enter Katharina Kepler

Katharina. What, Ursula? Why do
 you stand today

Where often you have scorned to
 set one foot?

Ursula. No soreness after dinner,
 piercingly

Strong in my bowels, could have
 in the hours

Of an Antarctic night convinced me
 thus

To greet you at your door, except
 for this

I suffer under.

Katharina. Is it an inflammation,
 wringing gout,

A fever sparing no known organ,
 heats

That speed the unsuspecting fool
 to death?

Urban. No, none of these.

Ursula. My illness is a secret spy,
 who comes

And goes in corridors, not seen to
 peep

In any chamber till his powders
blast

Most of the building.

Katharina. Then enter gladly here.

Urban. I will be generous if you
succeed.

Ursula. O! O! Relieve these pains,
or let me hear

Thick grass grow silently around
my head.

Katharina. Inside my house, the
faithful can at last

Behold a miracle none can deny.

Urban. Come, sister, you are safer
now.

Exeunt Ursula, Urban, and
Katharina

Act 1. Scene 2. A street in Prague.
1601

Enter Johannes Kepler and
Matthäus Wackher von
Wackenfels

Johannes. Yes, on the death of
Tycho Brahe named

Imperial mathematician in Prague.

Matthäus. Who doubts the fox has
found his hole?

Johannes. Not for the love and
adoration of

The goddess of the world,
promotion, do

I seek to rise, but for astronomy's.

Matthäus. I should believe you.
Grammar gives us suck

With dialectics and with rhetoric

To yield us mind and tongue,
whose progeny

May be obtained as jealous
mistresses

Reclining wantonly on narrow
beds.

First music kisses tickling our rapt
ears,

Then follow her twin sisters
rushing in:

Arithmetic, geometry- all three

You have already slept with, but
there is

One more you keep in secret from
men's eyes:

Astronomy the lovely.

Johannes. I have; none other
merits my cold bed.

Matthäus. But yet do you propose
to marry her?

Johannes. The sun will sooner
turn around the earth,

As some have dreamt awake, than
my faith fail.

Matthäus. Then please our
emperor and for yourself

You'll finger gold a-plenty, but the
world

Gains more in that: the knowledge
of that world.

Johannes. My face is to myself
anonymous.

If you knew Kepler better, you
would not

Be Kepler's friend. Know that your
Kepler is

Subject to sores, scabs, and foul,
putried wounds.

Like a house dog, I fawn and wag
the tail

Whenever pleased; I gnaw on
 bones and chew
 The dry bread of subservience,
 snap at legs
 Of strangers, then come back and
 fawn once more,
 To seek approval and to sniff
 about
 In books the dungheap of
 hypotheses,
 At all times still dependent on the
 smiles
 Of lordships, looking pitiful with
 tail on ground
 Whenever scathingly reprov'd, to
 which
 More fawning follows, licking of
 the hand
 That strikes, until the puppy wins
 the prize:
 His master's favor, though
 uncertainly.
Matthäus. But you have that which
 few dare to possess.
Johannes. One certain purpose I
 achieve at will:
 The power to expose false
 certitudes.
Matthäus. Then what can worry
 you?
Johannes. My mother, mean half-
 skeleton who fights
 Against most of her neighbors,
 bony wolf
 In bushes mouthing nightly as she
 stalks.
Matthäus. An all too common pest
 in town or court.

Exeunt Johannes and Matthäus

Act 1. Scene 3. A street in
 Leonberg. 1601

Enter Caleb and Luther Einhorn

Luther. O! Many miseries of my
 own making may
 Be turned away at once with that
 amount.

Without that sum, I should not
live.

Caleb. Because you are a
 magistrate, I may

Obtain advantages against a cheat.

Luther. Will I be grateful to one
 whom many freezing in debt have
 cursed to find comfortably lying
 beside his fire?

Caleb. Done.

Luther. Tomorrow?

Caleb. At my house.

Luther. Safe! I revere your scroll,
 eternal lamp,
 And candelabrum.

Enter Urban Kräutlin

Urban. My good best friend,
 Luther.

Luther. Greet a companion at last
 better comforted than he
 miserably was.

Caleb. Money makes him.

Urban. Who is sadder with more
 money on him?

Luther. This loan cannot be
 forgotten, Caleb.

Caleb. I do not doubt it, sir.

Urban. Call him a Jew, Caleb, if he forgets you.

Caleb. I will if he remembers.

Luther. Well answered.

Exit Caleb

Safe!

Urban. I'm heartily glad to find you out of an immediate and dangerous debt.

Luther. Shivering on waves of the sea inside an oarless tugboat, Urban, on which I would not condemn unrepentant child murderers when I catch them.

Urban. Very happily resolved. Should we go in to dinner?

Luther. I'll gladly pay for food and drink to friends

And other unknown smilers I may like.

Urban. A Jew creates for us the sun on earth

A second time with money.

Exeunt Luther and Urban

Act 1. Scene 4. A field outside of Leonberg. 1601

Enter Hobnot and Cuddie

Hobnot. Say, Cuddie, should we dance and sing awhile?

Cuddie. Too willingly I laze and doze all day.

Hobnot. I'll string my lute while you blow on your flute.

Cuddie. Right, though I would much rather blow on yours.

Hobnot. Sweet, so would I, while hiding deep in night.

Cuddie. A man may not allow such pleasures to

Be known to spying neighbors loathing them.

Hobnot. (singing

One morning as a child of twelve,

Cuddie. (singing

Hey-ho nostalgia time,

Hobnot. I scratched and yawned, I rose and pissed,

Cuddie. With clog on heel to school we trudged.

Hobnot. The teacher found we could not count,

Cuddie. Hey-ho the doltish clowns,

Hobnot. So nose to ground and arse in air,

Cuddie. He made us add at either end.

Hobnot. On Sunday, boys feign to adore,

Cuddie. Hey-ho the priest and cross;

Hobnot. For man nailed high with arms spread wide,

Cuddie. His snot's on chest when nose is blown.

Hobnot. A youth loves fights with Arab Jews,

Cuddie. Hey-ho Jerusalem,

Hobnot. And lifting skirts with dark veil on,

Cuddie. For mixing seeds should favor peace.

Hobnot. With her hole plugged,
one more is sought,

Cuddie. Hey-ho two men in bed,

Hobnot. On sterile ground their
seed to spill,

Cuddie. For pleasures rise when
planters fall.

Hobnot. All holidays must end
some time,

Cuddie. Hey-ho sad roundelay;

Hobnot. We lie in church and
rings exchange,

Cuddie. To bring discomfort to
our home.

Hobnot. A man comes in to rest
or play,

Cuddie. Hey-ho forget that dream;

Hobnot. She'll make him work,
complain all day,

Cuddie. Before his bread is dipped
in cream.

Hobnot. With pointed breasts
she'll scream and cry,

Cuddie. Hey-ho the wind and rain;

Hobnot. We plead with songs to
one unique,

Cuddie. False note: same woman
everywhere.

Hobnot. Her belly swells with
none of ours,

Cuddie. Hey-ho the little brats,

Hobnot. Who feed on cakes while
learning rules;

Cuddie. More Hobnots and more
Cuddies grow.

Hobnot. All men are knaves, all
women whores,

Cuddie. Hey-ho the end is near,

Hobnot. But then so what? We eat
and fuck;

Cuddie. That life is best when we
ask less.

Hobnot. So ends our madrigal
most pastoral.

Cuddie. Airs of the country
favored by the few.

Hobnot. Here to assure our
entertainment best

Comes forth a kind of Jew or Jew
unkind.

Enter Caleb

Caleb. What, loons like pebbles on
my path, knaves, kerns, dreary
clods in Sunday hats, little folk as
thin and pliant as my shoe-laces,
though never so useful?

Hobnot. Do we suck out your air?

Caleb. No, all ways are favorable
to me, for I, main figure in my
tribe, dispensed today a deed of
charity likely to be of lasting
profit only to myself.

Hobnot. His generosity rises to
cast down.

Cuddie. My tongue is blue with
cold. I must attend

To a dear brother grieving in his
house,

Who nearly died in bed last night
alone.

It was so cold that when he blew
his nose

It fell away.

Hobnot. Cool ears of usury sleep
on warm sheets.

Caleb. I am unlike a huddler with
his lambs.

Each day the rich are happier than
you are,
For every moment money we
caress
To buy rich food, neat clothes,
and houses warm
In breadth and influence. Note
this at last.

Hobnot. We do and groan at it.

Caleb. I eat my profits with a lusty
mouth,
Enlarge my paunch in mounting
piles of flesh,
For I long mightily to gorge and
swill.

It makes me happy. Glad I am this
day.

Not only am I joyous to eat meat
Beyond all thoughts delicious, but
I am

Much gladder still that few men
can afford

So fine a dish, although they seem
to faint

Quite overburdened in trying to
obtain

Once in a year what I consume
each meal.

Hobnot. No doubt horseradish,
cucumber, beets mixed with pike,
goose liver, and roasted lamb.

Caleb. We smack the lips before
your eager face

And drop in privies finer
nutriment

Than what appears on envious
country plates.

And thus say I to my own glass
each night:

"Be great, be greater, greatest,
best of all;

In sight of nations triumph as you
wish,

Or as you might, or will."

Cuddie. He might do it.

Caleb. I will go in now, to possess
all lands

Once promised me, by Moses
written well,

To wealth and fame in the entire
world.

Hobnot. Ha!

Caleb. We will arise and swell,
and, swelling, grow

In exploitation, yet beloved by
some,

No Arab in his tent allowed to
speak

One word against our growing;
otherwise,

In prison he must shrink for
speaking ill

Against the powerfulest.

Cuddie. Should we hear more?

Caleb. This I aver to every Hebrew
ear:

"Do not heed the opinions of the
great

And bloated only, but of lesser
men's,

For small fry bite small enemies to
death."

We feed their dreams with plenty.

"For one night,

I slept like Solomon between two
whores

With richest garb in palaces of
gold,"

Smile thankfully materialists I
serve.

Hobnot. A starving spider's
dangling from his web

Is our best lot next to a richer
Jew's.

Caleb. I am the one called in, for
all the rest

Still err in lacking confidence to
fight

With tools of war and thought
against the foe.

Hobnot. He's called in, Cuddie,
while we are called out

In frosts to tend our silly sheep in
want.

Caleb. I sigh and say: "My people,
do not fear,

For I with my god will contend
with them,

Oppose fools to destruction, so
that all

The Christian world with us will
arm themselves

To lift the flags of death in mighty
fleets."

Cuddie. A goodly power favors his
estate.

Caleb. When we return with force
in Palestine,

We will begin to wear the helm
and sword

That will make nations tremble in
our midst.

Expect the favorites of god, or
that

Celestial mushroom governing the
world,

To drive men's bones as
fragments to our will

Before our thought-usurping
caravels.

Hobnot. Meanwhile, he cheats.

Caleb. I answer to the blind: "Your
house is there,"

When it is clearly on the other
side.

Cuddie. And takes their money.

Caleb. My money is much dearer
than my wife.

If I discover any of it in

Your hand, I will stone you to
death for it.

I will not pardon here. O, no, I'll
wear

A woman's garment first and that
you know

Is quite against the habit of our
sex,

Or else pull down my father's
breeches while

He dozes, contrary to what bestirs
My usual prick of mind.

Hobnot. Ambition speaks with her
own tongue at last.

Caleb. I will do this and not a
second thing.

I may not plow with one ass and
my ox.

I am brought in and may possess
all that

I lack in all the earth and heaven,
too.

I sit before my house and say: "All
this

Is mine, and none may take a
dust-ball out

Of it, on pain of gibbering in cells
Far smaller than the box where his
cats piss."

I am established, like a sheat of stone

Beneath a mighty mansion, soon to be

The praise of nations.

Hobnot. And very dangerous to be dislodged.

Caleb. Receive known prophecies on days of doom.

You'll bury thousands more each day of life

Than all our newborns thriving in the year.

God's finger points at you as men of sin

And vilest lewdness. If you stand with us,

You will be blessed beyond all men above,

In riches, wisdom, gladness, and renown-

Yes, those who love us will be praised and clasped,

With gifts of love received in every house,

Rejoicers dancing in the halls of kings,

While those who hate us will be cursed and spoiled,

With plagues unknown abandoned in the fields,

Contemners idly slipping into graves.

Enter Mustapha

Here is my friend, the one particular,

As only he can be who helps us to Important money.

Mustapha. Friend of my coffers!

Caleb. Friend of my houses!

Mustapha. Friend of my harems and my palaces!

Caleb. Friend of my vessels and commodities!

Hobnot. They worship demons of their own invention.

Mustapha. Have you received my orders?

Caleb. I have and thank you mightily for them.

Cuddie. Good, thank the turbaned thief society

Allows for its own profit.

Caleb. Why should not east with east embrace at last?

Deliberate neglect of Arab art

And science is on the world's puffy cheeks

A scorching black-streaked brand of whorish shame.

Mustapha. Most have in their worst follies and contempt

Forgotten all the lore proud Europe owes

To mathematic figures and designs

First demonstrated on our sapient scrolls.

Caleb. For those we praise you everlastingly.

Mustapha. Remind yourself how well a Persian mind

First calculated more precisely

Than thought of in Gregorian calendar

A shorter year adjusted to the sun.

Caleb. Love well the stranger, for
you may obtain
From him good merchandise, and
he from you
Some money lacking, to our
mutual weal
And miracles of fortune in the
land.

Throw out your shepherd's crook
and follow us.

Hobnot. We are instructed by this
fair exchange.

Cuddie. And happier for our
betterment to serve
Inspired prophets of commercial
love.

Exeunt Caleb, Mustapha, Hobnot,
and Cuddie

Act 2. Scene 1. The imperial court
in Prague. 1609

Enter Johannes Kepler and
Matthäus Wackher von
Wackenfels

Matthäus. Astromers who follow
errantly

The errant ways of planets look
and blink,

But always fail to see what they
perceive.

Johannes. In Tycho's papers I have
traced more orbs

In true positions than were ever
known.

Matthäus. Then arm yourself with
incredulity,

To guide the wayfarers back to
their house.

Johannes. To them I'll show my
new astronomy.

Matthäus. The motions of the
planets on your charts
Seem like their second birth, at
last to be

Known to intelligent humanity.

Johannes. Copernicus dispelled
old Ptolemy's

Night-vapors with his steady
centric sun.

Matthäus. But like a janizzary in
the heat

Of noonday desert dunes you pull
down hard

The phantom horses of their
epicycles.

Johannes. True, careful measures
of triangulation

Between the sun, the earth, and
Mars show that

Our planet moves like any other,
fast

Whenever near the sun, and
slower as

It moves away.

Matthäus. To verify your
measures, I will need

Ten lives in prison served with
meat and wine.

Johannes. If you are weary of my
calculations,

Take pity on the man who verified
Them seventy times.

Matthäus. I pity enviously.

Johannes. If speeds of planets
change as the result

Of one sure force exerted by the
sun-

A reasonable supposition-

The sun can never lie exactly at

Their center-point.

Matthäus. Then where?

Johannes. The planets court the
sun

In an elliptic roundelay, where he
Basks at one focal-point.

Matthäus. If proven to be true,
may Kepler be

Acknowledged as the priest of
nature's book.

Johannes. And there is more to
tell:

The area swept by any planet's
path

Around the sun in equal units of
Time is a constant value and the
same.

Matthäus. More unsought
mysteries by Kepler solved!

What is the nature of this mighty
force?

Johannes. We can conjecture that
as all the earth

Pulls down this stone, the stone in
turn pulls up

The earth. Thus, in my new
astronomy,

Mechanic reasons are for the first
time

Made beautiful and true. But I
despair

To fly a bolder course throughout
the skies

When my mind's caked in silence
of their frosts.

Matthäus. First publish widely,
then the wintry sun

Of this world's honor may to your
content

Melt them forever.

Exeunt Johannes and Matthäus

Act 2. Scene 2. A street in
Leonberg. 1609

Enter Ursula Reinbold and Urban
Kräutlin

Ursula. Her pills and herbs make
me a little better than I was, but
yet much worse.

Urban. On portions of a
sumptuous cake, we often find, to
taste it all, our best friend
sprinkle death.

Ursula. How can I trip her down?

Urban. Her son owes me money.
Degenerate quean!

Ursula. Never in my hearing use
that word. I once disrobed before
men's eyes the filthiest parts of
whoredom, now happily
transformed by honest virtues and
my husband's cudgel into a
sweeter form of womanhood.

Urban. Dregs of neighborliness!
We swallow familiar filths, undone
and forever unhappy.

Ursula. I usually leave her house
devoid of pain and wretchedness,
and yet, brother, in the end no
sweeter than I was.

Urban. A paradox smelling of
damnation!

Ursula. What honorable person
would not grind
The teeth at this?

Urban. Is patience virtue? Stoic
foolishness,

The doting father of Christianity!

Ursula. Some plot I'll simmer in
my pot of hate,

Though slow quite dangerous, lest
we imbibe

Hell's broth on a kind woman's
salver.

Exeunt Ursula and Urban

Act 2. Scene 3. The imperial court
in Prague. 1612

Enter Caleb and Hobnot

Caleb. Ten men sit smiling in a
room of scorn,

Refusing to pay what they
borrowed.

Here, take this cudgel, sir. Knock
out the brain

Of my first debtor reeling drunk
from there.

Hobnot. Ha! Are you mad?

Caleb. Are you my man or not?
Stand and obey.

Hobnot. I may return to prison for
this deed,

Where, for your benefices, I have
lain

Twice, or perhaps three times
before.

Caleb. Conceal yourself behind
that pillar. Go.

Hobnot. I will not do it.

Enter Johannes Kepler and
Matthäus Wackher von
Wackenfels

Matthäus. What's this? A groom
sporting a club at court?

Caleb. No, sir, merely his
toothpick. Good day to you.

Matthäus. I have once seen that
prosperous beard murmuring in
the imperial palace.

Caleb. No, sir, you never saw it in
your life,

And so we'll go.

Exeunt Caleb and Hobnot

Matthäus. Ha, is it possible? Court
debts now die

Dishonored and unmoaned and
creditors

Sleep not with wives but witches
of revenge.

Johannes. As court advisor to the
emperor,

You may with profit rail on fools
and knaves.

Matthäus. What, will you leave the
court?

Johannes. I have to the world
given my "Dioptrics" and

I have no more to say.

Matthäus. With your "Dioptrics",
we can understand

At last what we behold.

Johannes. A friend speaks kindly.

Matthäus. Your virtual image is
much truer than

The world's as we see it.

Johannes. I see with double
convex lenses that
You mean to flatter.

Matthäus. To keep you rather.
Our Emperor Rudolph Second of
that name
Deposed! His brother, pious in his
hate
Of any who denies religious
truths,
Elected in his stead! I am a-whirl,
Outside the sway of your
controlling sun.

Johannes. The headstrong
emperor permits me for
Three hundred thirty guilders
every year
And sixty more for firewood to
keep my
Position as mathematician in the
court
As well as in the district of fair
Linz.

Matthäus. At Linz, I'll visit you.

Johannes. At Linz, I'll always
welcome best of friends.

Exeunt Johannes and Matthäus

Act 2. Scene 4. A tavern in Linz.

1612

Enter Mustapha and Cuddie
carrying a huge jug

Mustapha. A little farther bend
the pliant knee
In pain and sorrow.

Cuddie. My master, here I'll sit
and breathe awhile.

I lack the strength to fart.

Mustapha. Rest; to restore you
faster, drink your fill.

Cuddie. (farting
O best of recompenses!

Mustapha. You offer incense to a
god we see.

As taught by Avicenna and by
Paul,

Unwatered wine stuffed bloating
may amend.

Cuddie. The better, then, unless
the wine is mixed

With some saliva of sweet men of
sin.

Mustapha. Strive for your
pleasure. Put the heavy jug

Down as our lamp of wisdom. In
this land,

I sell luxurious cloth, with
licorice,

Dates, raisins, precious spices of
all kinds,

And with huge profits hugely
drink all day

Wines of the grape, wines of the
fig and more.

Why work again if our reward is
work?

Cuddie. Ah, ah!

Mustapha. Defeated Rudolph
rests, an emperor

Of dust. On the cold ground let
him remain.

Drink, boy, for in the passing of a
dream,

We'll stink as any king bereft of
breath.

Cuddie. Where is our tavern-
keeper, master Froth?

Mustapha. Pissing in his sleep
below the stairs.

May his wet breeches honor, as
ours do,

The holy bread and wine with
meat of pork.

Cuddie. On a sad grave praying,
may parishioners
Lie drunk on vapors wafted from
my corpse.

Mustapha. The pious Christians
waste their time in church

With what we do more pleasantly:
eat down

Our god with wine.

Cuddie. Because he did not see me
in his church,

The parson cursed me bitterly
today.

Mustapha. To chatter with a single
man each day

Suffices to turn me from all the
rest.

Cuddie. Priests will I push off even
in my tomb.

Mustapha. Blind piety reproves
blind atheists,

And gives them spectacles to see
quite clear

What never can be seen. Do not
heed them.

Of heaven no one knows a
beggar's fart.

Our terror, hope, disdain,
indifference

Are fumes; we talk; the day
begins; we talk;

Each day is ended with its smoke;
we talk.

Cuddie. To weep for Jesus is a
vanity,

Because he's dead, with spiders in
the dust

Of centuries long buried.

Mustapha. If your religion be

To clasp a willing virgin,

And celebrate your vigor in her
blood,

Then I'm religious;

If to deface with love-songs
margins of

Hymn-books and snore during the
rituals be

Acts of deep piety and songs of
grace,

Then I'm religious.

Cuddie. I practice charity as Paul
suggests,

For man and woman I love equally

In bed. Why should I not? Both
have two arms,

Two legs, and places man can
enter deep.

Mustapha. My idle words lack
power to describe

Tenacity in camels, or the sway

Of a girl's hips, but this I say to
fools

Inside a church: do not stay there,
for sleep

Is better, drinking best. In
mosques, I strike

My brow on mats and raise my
arse in air,

Because I drink too much.

Cuddie. The temple dreamt by
lusty Solomon,

The books of angry sages,
parables,

Return of prodigals, and miracles
Are wonderful and true, but not
above

The urine of a man who has not
heard

One word of them.

Mustapha. Truth needs no miracle
to be believed.

The caller on my minaret cries
out:

"Time for a glass! Drink deeply all
day long,

Bowl after bowl until the night
arrives,

And then tomorrow morning pray
at once

So that you may in joy begin
anew."

Cuddie. There is more soul in
overflowing cups

Than in all churches, mosques,
and synagogues.

Mustapha. As prophets of the
tavern once revealed:

"Look elsewhere for a man to
combat lust

And heresy, for these my
scabbard's pierced,

My falchion limply trailing on the
ground,

My horse's bit well fastened to its
tail,

And I ride backward as fast as I
can."

Cuddie. I never listen to a priest;
instead,

I always do whatever I should not.

Mustapha. Physicians warn us of
grave illnesses,

So long as to their science we
submit;

So does the priest with his
disease. I say:

There is more danger in our
doctor's pills,

As well as their creators,
fabricants,

And sellers than in sleeping hot in
sin.

Like fractions multiplied by
fractions,

We are diminished cruelly by
them.

Cuddie. My parson asks: "Why do
you drink so much?

Why are you always at the cards
and dice?"

I answer thus:

"I drink because I drank; I'll play
because I play."

Mustapha. Beware that only
gravediggers for fees

Receive one's body worthy of
regard.

If by my death no one has lost,

How can I say in life I won?

To drink too much is folly to the
wise.

Cuddie. To drink too little is the
lot of fools.

I'll dally with my bottle-neck and
cling

Lasciviously to her fat bottom's
end.

When am I wiser grown?

Not when my host declares:

"Give him a cup of wine," but
when he says:

"Here's Cuddie with another cup of wine."

Mustapha. When it is time for prayers, promise to
Renounce one thing: the prayers,
only those,
And you'll fare all the better every day.

Cuddie. The table on which stands our pot
Is much more precious than the cross, our cork
More saintly than his nails, our ruddy wine
More satisfying than his ghostly blood.

Mustapha. Drink, help your neighbor: Jesus on his cross
Did not know more.

Cuddie. If God be good, he'll pardon all our sins,
If God be bad, he surely is not.

Mustapha. If you arrive from heaven, I will heed
The stories of your heaven, but if not,
I'll kiss Mohammed when he flies back down.

Enter Johannes Kepler

Cuddie. What, will a Lutheran in taverns peep
On Sunday of all times?

Johannes. It seems I must be mocked before I say
One word. Where is my brother?

Cuddie. Where you should look for him.

Mustapha. A Lutheran will to a Papist speak
And a Mohammedan in the dark house
Of wine and disputation?

Johannes. I am united with all Christians in
A special bond of love and willingly
With all my brethren trade in words of peace.

Contrariwise, our leaders couch no more
With old simplicity but with the witch
Of trouble and dispute, interpreting
Maliciously each Papist word and deed.

Mustapha. True, fiery heads in foul Germanic lands
With heat and smoke obscure our common path.
Sir, what is your profession? Not divine?

Johannes. As chief mathematician of our town,
I am expected to yield prophecies;
As teacher in the seminary school,
I am instructed to make young men wise.

Mustapha. For the first, we see folly dressed with robes
Of borrowed wisdom; for the second, mouths
Of fools make wisdom seem but folly's mask.

Cuddie. His brother's near.

Mustapha. Let us rejoice in full view of the sun.

After despair of heavy toil: new life.

Cuddie. Our burden's lighter when the profit's known.

Exeunt Mustapha and Cuddie,
enter Cristoph Keppler

Johannes. How, Cristoph, chewing hard on the tough meat
Of the world's faults? Then spread on it for once

A little mustard of spiced charity,
Unless you hope with moping to be saved.

Is it well seen to creep dispiritedly,

In shabby corners spitting spiteful scorns,

With tavern brawling ever entertained,

Before each plate full-garnished dinnerless,

Unsociably sociable?

The inimproved with jangling stupefy

The man of purpose in perpetual scales

Of interruptedness.

Cristoph. I am unlucky each day of my life.

I should in bed remain, to watch the streaks

Of the day's sun sweep on the coverlet.

As pewterer, I hold more metal in
My wares than mettle in my saddened soul.

Johannes. What of our mother?

Cristoph. If to snarl and to mumble over broths

Be a poor widow's fortune, she is well.

Johannes. She makes the very heart of charity

Seem ugly to her neighbors.

Cristoph. For my part, I fare all the worst

By her attentions, as may be divined

In my deep wounds and scars.

I sleep with trouble daily, without love.

By children I am beaten, bitten by
Most animals, chased from my house to ponds

And back. Last week, I nearly drowned when winds

Hurled like a constable's incipient wrath

My boat, and my neck nearly burnt to ash

When mother's busy skillet fell on it.

When will you visit her?

Johannes. When I arrive in Leonberg.

Cristoph. The week when Wednesday follows Saturday.

Exeunt Johannes and Cristoph

Act 3. Scene 1. A street in Linz.

1615

Enter Caleb and Hobnot

Caleb. They owe me money.

Hobnot. I heard of that.

Caleb. Then follow my behests,
lest you become
Cursed in your dealings with a
careless world.
There will be blotches on their
hands and feet,
They will behold their face before
a glass
And say in deepest fear: "This not
not I,"
They will bend down to defecate
and find
No hand to wipe themselves in
cleanliness.
Their loins will burn in full
extremity
Of itching. Mildews will forever
breed
On creases of their brow,
untouched by mead.
There will not be one part of
wholesomeness
In their entire body, out or in.
They will be men accursed of all,
but most
By their own selves. Like blots or
tumescence
Cut off as soon as seen or smelt
half-way,
They will be treated as disease
unknown.
Their mouth will be well-rounded
in an "O",
Not knowing any other syllable
But that of pain and sorrow.
They will lack tools and roads to
kill themselves,
Without an eye to guide the final
blow,

Quite earless to the rushing of a
stream,
And enemies will laugh to find
their griefs
Incurable and mounting.
Hobnot. Hell is no fable; it lies in
your head.
Caleb. If they are punished hard,
I'll gladly lose
My gold with pleasure, like
virginity.
Hobnot. Yet poverty, we know, is
a neglected sister.
Caleb. And wealth our most
essential mistress: love
Her well. She like a goddess
makes the lame
Winged Atalantas bending to no
fruit,
Turns fools into well-read
philosophers
And sages into fools, makes men
admire
Songs of hoarse ladies like the
Orphean lyre,
And students of a needless fantasy
Into commanding popes.
Hobnot. A money-lender who
forgets a debt
Would seem to us a proven
miracle.
Caleb. The only miracle man ever
saw
Is man believing in a miracle.
If we eat, copulate, drink, and
disturb
No one, then our religion's good.

Enter Cristoph Kepler and Urban
Kräutlin

Night-treading whisperers of
darkest shame,
Far have I followed you,
possessing tongues
And wits to make the worst of
matters good.

You owe me money, sirs. Bethink
yourselves:

Can you expect to laugh and cog
at this?

Urban. I'll pay you when my debts
are reimbursed.

Caleb. My money!

Cristoph. Dissembling Urban, I
paid everything

To all extremities of satisfaction.

Urban. A tinsmith baffling me?

Caleb. My money!

Enter Johannes Kepler

Urban. Pay what is owed. That
would be best for you.

Cristoph. I paid what I affirmed I
would.

Johannes. The matter of a tavern
reckoning?

Urban. Keep your wife warm in
bed.

Cristoph. Ho, Urban, hear my
harshest diatribe:

You lie. If dogs could lie, your lies
would be

Like those of surgeon-dogs,
pretending to

Amend the sickly each day of
their life.

Urban. Confusedly dishonest!
Blockish block!

I loathe a bad comparison much
worse

Than a bad man.

Caleb. My money!

Cristoph. A fool heeds blows.

Urban. I will anoint you king of
kingly fools.

(They fight

Johannes. What, Christians
striking hard each other's face
For money? In deep shame desist
for once.

Caleb. If blows could either kill
the maddened beasts
Or turn them into grateful
Solomons!

Cristoph. O! O! I'm blinded.

Urban. That makes me happy.
Eyes by lying blood
Stung and disfigured!

Yet that's too brief a pain, for I
intend

To spend the rest of my life
hitting you.

Cristoph. How firmly yet his
clumps of hair are seized,
No less than the main matter on
his head.

Urban. I have felt joy in fixing well
a bone,

But never half so much as
breaking yours.

Taste that and more. Ha, still with
teeth and arms?

Cristoph. Yes, happy even in my
death-throes, sir,

Provided I can blister well a face

Twice-perjured every minute it
can speak.

Johannes. Enough.

Urban. I spy a constable afar,
which saves
A cheating fool from further
punishment.

Exit Urban

Caleb. There goes part of my
money.

Johannes. It would be best to try
another day.

Caleb. I'm tamed for once. But let
your brother heed:

A lender's mercy will not last
beyond

A hungry flea's lifetime in well-
washed sheets.

Exit Caleb

Hobnot. I begin to tire of that
poorest of rich masters.

Johannes. Well thought on!

Hobnot. But what I wish for I can
never know,

Or even care to know at all.

Exit Hobnot

Johannes. Here is my
handkerchief to wipe some blood
Away from brow and teeth.
Henceforth, forbear

Such tricks as quite distract to his
despite

A science-minded man by science
loved

From furnishing with Brahe's
observations

A glorious map of stars, together
with

Sure means to calculate precisely
Exact positions of the planets in
The past, the present, and the
future.

Cristoph. Bad news from
Leonberg- no, horrible-
News of our mother's almost
certain death

At the stake.

Johannes. Hah?

Cristoph. She is accused of
witchcraft.

Johannes. My buttons burst in
grief.

To Leonberg! I have been too
remiss.

Exeunt Johannes and Cristoph

Act 3. Scene 2. A street in
Leonberg. 1615

Enter Ursula Reinbold and
Katharina Kepler

Ursula. Scorned and debased as a
glass-maker's wife!

Scorns will be paid and then in
full repaid

With doubled double interest.

Katharina. Have you not often
prospered with

My potent salves and herbal
tonics?

Ursula. I have, as you will find when your tin cup is cruelly melted on your eyes and ears.

Katharina. This is to help one's neighbor! Old shoes should die in closets.

Ursula. As you will find, because your home's in hell.

Katharina. Miserable woman alone, with no one to help.

Ursula. Your kind of help is mostly known to hurt.

Katharina. Bad tempers make it so.

Ursula. Go, old thing; shuffle towards damnation.

Exit Katharina and enter Urban Kräutlin

Urban. The villagers say she is accused of witchcraft.

Ursula. Behold her tongue of accusation, and, with some luck, the whip that waits on sinning.

Urban. I think you have done well.

Ursula. I know I have.

Urban. Her son owes me money.

Ursula. You saw me, bent and grimacing, enter her house with seething belly, when she gave the potion that sickens, since which day every minute is to me a lurking grave.

Urban. No doubt some nasty beverage usually of marvellous benefit to an evilly constituted woman.

Ursula. Not pains as the result of an abortion, as she maliciously

suggests. The same concoction lamed Beutelspacher, our worthy foolish schoolmaster. There is more to tell and gape at. Cristoph Frick, the butcher, once felt a painful twitch in his thigh as she casually passed in front of his shop, and this without her even touching him. When he kneeled at her pew, begging for help, immediately the pains were relieved. Hear more: Daniel Schmid, the tailor, once invited her to his house to show with pride his two gurgling bouncing babies. As she looked over their cradle to bless them, they suddenly plopped breathless on that same night. Moreover, I have heard neighbors complain of bewitched livestock, of moaning and of kicking in stables and fields, first noticed in her presence.

Urban. I am no lawyer, but these appear to be the beginning of good indirect evidence.

Enter Johannes Kepler

Johannes. For holy Christian charity and love,

Retract the awful accusation.

Ursula. When two suns rise from Western skies.

Johannes. Malicious lies! And for what reason?

Urban. Can a sister lie in such a matter?

Ursula. To defend a mother, you know, is to invite inquiry into her son's habits. Scrupulous authority may find no oil of sainthood painted on your brow and lips.

Re-enter Katharina Kepler

Johannes. O, mother, you are dreadfully threatened.

Katharina. What, menaces? How, monkey turd, by you?

Johannes. Of witchcraft.

Katharina. Ha, witchcraft! Ha! O, slaves, it can be proved

By no one, yet I may be quite annulled.

Ursula. I'll be quiet and serenely meditate on my deeds the day you are awfully condemned, redeeming any lesser fault of mine. Truth is a soft bed-light.

Katharina. How have I hurt you?

Ursula. Your breathing harms.

Katharina. She is of Leonberg malice the sorceress, a cat's black companion in evil.

Ursula. A goat is your companion and that our magistrates will discover.

Johannes. Old female babble.

Ursula. They'll probe into every hole in your body to find where the devil pleased you.

Exeunt Ursula and Urban

Johannes. I'll consult all the lawyers I know with those I do not. Do you grieve to give your

enemies strength? The innocent smile at lies and innuendoes. This accusation will be dismissed and laughed over foam of beer in October.

Katharina. I once lived with an aunt condemned to death at the stake.

Johannes. Hah?

Katharina. They will recall the day when I asked that my father's skull be disinterred and turned into a drinking vessel- for I had heard in a sermon that a drinking cup in shape of a skull is a pleasant custom of ancient people-, but my request was refused by the gravedigger, since I lacked a form of approval by any figure sufficient in authority.

Johannes. Mere turpitudes!

Katharina. I once drove a cow to death and roasted one side of it for your brother, Henry, who, refusing the dish, said: "Let a fat hungry devil eat it." This son angrily left the house and, to beat back a thin demon into his larger hole, impaled the calf of that cow on the door of its stall.

Johannes. What of Beutelspacher?

Katharina. I never harmed Beutelspacher. He was lamed when leaping over a grave-stone with a heavy basket on his back.

Johannes. I have since childhood heard many neighbors declare these words: "Kätherchen is garrulous, hot-tempered, nasty, quarrelsome, vengeful, inquisitive,

preparing many dangerous
potions she knows little of and
offering neighbors spoiled
beverages from her favorite tin
cup."

Katharina. The same was said of
my grandmother, a restless and
violent bearer of grudges, often
ablaze with ferocious hatreds,
though sound in matters of
religious doctrine.

Johannes. We plummet from the
reach of heaven to

Pant in the narrow pits of law.

Exeunt Johannes and Katharina

Act 3. Scene 3. A Leonberg
hunting lodge. 1615

Enter Urban Kräutlin and Luther
Einhorn with muskets

Urban. Tomorrow we will hunt the
boar with spears.

Luther. These muskets well may
serve for other game.

Urban. If only man could be
allowed to use

Such instruments of order to
prevent

The practice of known evils! One I
have

In mind, a bitter creditor I hate.

Luther. Hold, that can never be.

Enter Caleb

Urban. The cobra rises to stare
down two dupes

Choked on the poison of high
interests.

Luther. You owe him money, too?

Caleb. The world owes me my due,
which I will get.

Urban. What, glorying in our
fierce miseries?

Caleb. Why do you point a musket
on my face

When I have saved you? Has not
Jewish gold

Cut injury away from Christian
nets?

Luther. For shame, put down your
weapon.

Urban. It is no sin to kill a sinning
Jew.

Luther. You still forget I am a
magistrate.

Down, lest I study never to have
known

Your love or your contempts.

Caleb. Is it religious to be courted
first

For money, then abandoned when
men lack?

Luther. You come forth naked.
Where in secret cave

Or closet darkly lurks your
servitor?

Caleb. My man is quite forgotten
as he lies

I guess not where.

Luther. It may be easily seen that
on this night

From us you will retrieve but
filthy words,

In no wise filthy money.

Caleb. The filth returns to man.

Exit Caleb

Urban. I have a small request, not
to the friend,

But to the magistrate.

Luther. Your neighbor is a witch,
some people say.

Urban. That. You will hear my
urgent plea, I hope.

We understand each other?

Luther. Hum, yes, or no; I cannot
delve through all,

Unless the accusation is prepared
With careful study, in full
cognizance

Of good or bad report, what men
have seen

Or only thought they saw, what
men have heard

Or only were told of. To sift away

The inadmissible is duty's oath

In magistrates of soundest
judgment, yours

To pick out grains and choose the
rightful tares,

Preventing poison ere the case is
weighed.

Urban. In serious matters, friends
can silently

Behold each other and know all is
well.

Exeunt Urban and Luther

Act 3. Scene 4. Before the
Leonberg court-house. 1615

Enter Katharina Kepler

Katharina. (knocking at the door

Ho! Ho! Someone within! No man
or beast?

Enter Hobnot above

Hobnot. Who knocks? What is
your wish from our dark house
Of questioning and pain?

Katharina. O, sir, I beg you- Ha! I
have once seen

That faceless face of blood.

Hobnot. And so have many more:
my mother's one,

A face that killed her well.

Katharina. The Jew's most servile
of his serving-men.

Hobnot. No more. I left my master
to become

The worthy village executionner.

Katharina. Where is our honored
master, kindly judge

In matters of deep faith? He must
be just

In a poor fearful woman's case, or
else

I am forever in my grave undone.

Hobnot. He left an hour ago.

Exit Hobnot above

Katharina. Ha! Gone? Ignored and
mocked by a dry knave?

Re-enter Hobnot below

Hobnot. Some quiet would be
seemlier. I have been

At tortures all this morning,
sounded with

Such cries as must hurt any head
of sense.

Katharina. O, there you wring me
in a frenzied knot.

Hobnot. What is the nature of
your trouble?

Katharina. I am accused of
witchcraft.

Hobnot. You'll surely be burnt to
death, at best

Stoned shoeless in your shirt.

Katharina. Do not quite kill me in
my terrible

And lonely fears. O! O! O!

Hobnot. Limbs fit for mangling, so
that justicers

May know accomplices of evil life.

I'm new yet at this goodly line of
work,

And will quite humbly take the
happy charge

As part of my apprenticeship,
most glad

For the experience.

Katharina. What, will they take me
soon?

Hobnot. Weep on dry pillows; with
tomorrow's moon

The iron chain must be your
bedsheet, which

I will prepare and whistle as I wait.

Exit Hobnot, enter Urban Kräutlin
and Luther Einhorn

Urban. That is the woman, woeful
man's worst woe,

The drily sapless witch, apt to
prick off

With wooden finger honest men to
death.

Katharina. Sir, do not listen to
unhappy man

When you know truth is almost
always born

From the unhappy pit of woman's
grief.

Luther. I should know reasons to
know neither, for

I have not studied this bad case as
yet.

Katharina. A neighbor and his
sister only tell

Lies to be rid of me.

Luther. Go, go; I'll summon you,
should there be need.

Urban. Will she escape so soon? I
challenge you,

In presence of this worthy
magistrate,

To make my sister well.

Katharina. Ha! Ha! Ha! Drawing on
my withered breast

The sharpest of all swords except
the tongue

Of a deceiving mouth?

Luther. Ha! Are you mad? Am I a
magistrate

Or fellow to the bibbing
swaggerer?

Is fury your high lord? Reflect how
Christ

Kissed his dark sweaty post in
quietness.

Is drunken folly king? Remind
yourself

How he drank vinegar with
broken mouth.

The man wept blood. Will you
with wet cheeks laugh?

The man wept blood. Will you
with roaring throats

Presume to understand when
Rome could not?

Urban. O for the belly of
Democritus

To keep from bursting at the sight
of spleen!

What actor plays not folly,
foolishly

Distraught at a fool's fault, or
laughingly

Make light of it, applauded by
more fools?

I will choose good when charms
are cut away.

Katharina. No, I refuse,
considering well that

To put off evil by a counter-evil is
A witch's game.

Exit Katharina

Luther. Illegal matter, sir. Before a
court

Of justice threatening and in the
eyes

Of a well-thought-of justicer? My
ears

Against my will imbibe men's
foolishness

In drunken sadness.

Urban. You will not find it so
when patience hears,

Like a compliant king, the dangers
we

Are daily subject to by women's
tricks:

Outside Jerusalem, but deep
within

The burning pit of Sodom. For our
weal,

Take out from Adam yet another
rib;

The first one's rotting in her heart
and mind.

Luther. More senseless village
business all day long!

What sweaty stones of toil we
stagger with

To find the little nugget! I'll next
teach

My horse some grammar, easier
task by far

Than to conceive the reasons of
men's pains.

Exeunt Urban and Luther

Act 4. Scene 1. Katharina Kepler's
house in Leonberg. 1616

Enter Johannes Kepler and
Matthäus Wackher von
Wackenfels

Johannes. I have accused the
Reinbold family

Of slander. Is this just?

Matthäus. I do not know. Say why
you have done this.

Johannes. I stab the hand that hits
me.

Matthäus. Perhaps to be ensnared
and glued the worse

With spider-laws, to your own
detriment.

Enter Cuddie with a barrel

Cuddie. Sir, I'm sent by your mother for a few coins, poor as I am, to say she's in a worse fright and trouble than ever she was.

Johannes. Is it the Arab merchant's serving-man?

Cuddie. Cuddie, by his own avowal and assurance. In Leonberg, our Arab merchant works, or rests, as firmly and opulently established with us as in many other places of high and low renown. I arrive with comfort for certain griefs easy to be dislodged and with beatitude to anyone with money.

Johannes. I do not want more wine.

Cuddie. Horrible apostasy, if I may humbly and regretfully say so, as so many have pronounced kicking and leaping in market-place and houses of merriment. I offer you pardon, clemency, peace, a very great loving hand, a heaven for sinners on earth. Mercy was delivered to David's murdering envious heart, received by Habbakuk, promised to Zachariah, assured by Paul: do you reject it? Our citizens accuse each other, strike each other's neck and occiput, sometimes to death, an irremediable condition in the judgment or hope of many. Some lie for profit, steal for advantages, sleep for pleasure in a neighbor's bed, all these no doubt reprehensible, with speedy and

inevitable vengeance often bloodily falling on the perpetrator's caboché. Where is mercy? Here, revealed to you for all times and to your better hope, relief, and amendment, here, away from dissension, towards the ruddy light of light wine, to the shame and freezing of unbelievers. One cup may ease you of most dolours and sorrows, by your own making or not, by your friends' making or not, as it may please any who partake of it, translunar, or daily seen by us in common paths or obscure byways. Who says otherwise? Ananias and Sapphira fell down dead for not purchasing modest repose and companionship and do you refuse? Do you stop your ears from the voice of reconciliation and joy and not leap away from the coffin of no drinking?

Matthäus. Here limps your drooping mother.

Enter Katharina Kepler

Katharina. More horrors for deathless eld.

Johannes. Sit quietly beside your worried son to tell your story.

Katharina. A tale of a twelve-year-old girl, Katharina Haller, daughter of a laborer, who jumped in fright on looking at my almost rotted face around a corner of the mercer's shop- why wonder at it when considering

what her parents likely accuse me of?

Cuddie. She swore your venerable mother hit her on the right arm.

Katharina. When I only approached and extended my hand towards the girl's. These lies are infamously supported by her drunken witness, daughter to a brickmaker.

Cuddie. The girl's pains were already assuaged and becalmed when I heard her puling next to the court-house.

Katharina. Pains motivated, I think, by her being forced to carry heavy bags of brick to the kiln, a task she would happily be rid of.

Matthäus. Very probable.

Katharina. The villagers now say that my cup of charity tastes strongly of witchcraft.

Johannes. You have worse news, I can tell.

Katharina. I have done foolishly with foolish intent.

Johannes. What now?

Katharina. I offered Luther Einhorn, magistrate in my case, my best silver cup, should he omit his report to the chancery.

Johannes. Attempt at bribery!
A criminal offense!

Katharina. I grant you that and surely will lament
This fault till final ashes sink my head.

Matthäus. Now hated even by sensible people.

Johannes. Flee from Leonberg.

Katharina. I will not.

Johannes. Run to my sister's house in Heumaden.

Katharina. No.

Johannes. I say you must.

Katharina. Never.

Johannes. What will convince you?

Katharina. Nothing.

Cuddie. (striking her

A pitiable case.

Johannes. Ha! Are you mad?

Matthäus. He has knocked her senseless to the ground.

Cuddie. Conserve with care my wine of goodness and pity and pay me later, for, by faith in my own judgment, as may be read with many prophets of old, I'll liberate a son and mother from contumelies by guiding her with all niceties of comfort in my cart to Heumaden, where my master intends to be affirmed further and more solidly on the rock of more abundant riches.

Exit Cuddie carrying Katharina

Johannes. I'll follow a fool to save my mother.

Matthäus. And I the wine.

Exeunt Johannes and Matthäus
with the barrel

Act 4. Scene 2. Before Margarete
Kepler's house in Heumaden.

1617

Enter Luther Einhorn

Luther. (knocking at the door)
Arise, dull Cristoph Kepler, from
your lair.

A packaged fly from broken nets
of law

May drop away, to die more
cruelly,

As desiccated grubs awaiting still
The lazy open tooth that can cut
them.

Enter Cristoph Kepler

Cristoph. Am I undone?

Luther. I have warned, and am left
unheeded, sir,

I have with soreness pleaded, and
am left

Unheeded, like a Sunday
schoolmaster.

Cristoph. O, sir, disclose what may
or must be done

And I will die your servant in good
forms

Of surest law with strict
exactitude.

Does this concern my mother?

Luther. It does, most awfully.

Cristoph. Your errand without
guile.

Luther. I'm instructed by the
superior adviser of the courts to
arrest your mother for the crime
of witchcraft.

Cristoph. Death!

Luther. Take heart. If she be
guilty, we have her

In blood; if not, she's safe.

Cristoph. Snares and troubles!
How can I escape?

Luther. Speak briefly: have you
served a filthy witch

In any way?

Cristoph. O, never, sir, never,
never, never, never, as I hope to
live and die as an honest citizen.

Luther. That may be doubted from
a son's report.

Cristoph. My mother surely
understands the truth.

Luther. I hope that may be hoped
for. Know that she

Attempted to bribe a just
magistrate.

Cristoph. Ah, no! This news half
poisons heart and blood.

Luther. I'm not so loving to her
now as once

I was when dressed in robes of
innocence

And knew no evil in a woman's
heart.

Cristoph. What should be done?

Luther. Snatch her away from her
home, strip her clean,

Until we spy some bones of truth
on her.

Cristoph. Let it be done.

Luther. She's here? I may see her?

Cristoph. No no, out on a silly
errand.

Luther. No doubt to fetch your
food and serve your meals.

Let her be promptly sent to me in
haste.

Cristoph. I am no son if this be
left undone.

Luther. I must forewarn you: few
accused of this

Of heinous crimes the worst
reveal clear truths.

Cristoph. Sir, if there be no other
way at all

Of finding out and leading by the
hand

In open nakedness shy verity,
Which mirrored goodness hopes
for and expects,

Let her be tortured.

Luther. Now you speak kindly, for
her sake and yours.

Cristoph. Should she be proven
guilty, burn her well.

A guiltless man of crime must
never know.

Luther. No covin will be
bargained. Let her stand

With truths, or rot on beds of
rope with lies.

Exeunt Luther and Cristoph

Act 4. Scene 3. Margarete Kepler's
house in Heumaden. 1618

Enter Johannes Kepler and
Matthäus Wackher von
Wackenfels

Johannes. In sight of false
religions they embrace,
Ixions all aflame, with clouds.

Matthäus. The summer thunder is
now cannon fire.

Johannes. Say what is heard
concerning our worst fears.

Matthäus. There is a second
defenestration

In Prague: three Papists, good
administrators

But worse than devil martyrs in
the cause

Against the Lutherans, from
windows thrown

Down from a height of fifty feet.
Enraged,

Haphazard ragtags of fool-
Protestants

Seize cowls of dead-to-worlds
Franciscan monks

And coats of Jewish merchants,
folded with

No known opinion on each
faction's hate,

And murder them in open
common streets.

Johannes. Most certainly the start
of furious wars.

Enter Cuddie

Matthäus. Here's one who always
prances leisurely.-

Now, sir, reveal to us why you are
seen

To enter rooms with one hand on
your hip

Or buttock and the other on your
cup.

Cuddie. I think our buttocks are
to body parts

What altars are to hushed divinity.

Matthäus. Why, Cuddie?

Cuddie. Much like a priest I place
my hands on them

With bowed head praying that the
Jesus from
My friend's tomb enters in my
tabernacle.

Matthäus. So, sir, you are
conscripted in our fights,
We hear. You must be made to lay
aside

The cup and laurelled song.

Cuddie. Called to the wars? I hope
to hang instead.

Matthäus. The wreathed bowl
upraised will not serve here.

Cuddie. Although they cannoneer,
I'll snort in bed.

Matthäus. No sleep for sluggard
shoulders but in dust.

Enter soldiers

Cuddie. Am I the magnet to these
iron men?

1 Soldier. Come live with us in
tents.

Cuddie. No, rather die with you in
bandages.

I will stay here to pray for you
most nights,

In moving tributes well
remembered.

2 Soldier. March in our serried
ranks.

Cuddie. I had planned nothing
more laborious than

To shake off droplets from my
sated prick.

3 Soldier. Come, shallow belly, or
with lead be filled.

Cuddie. I'll lie a weeper on my
monument

If war-crazed folly urges more
than words.

Johannes. Poor mouth, of happy
laughter choked and stilled.

Cuddie. Reveal to me with skill,
large sons of Mars,

Why we are fighting. Why must
Cuddie die?

Why should my blood gild a
pope's golden shoe?

Can we eat crusty pies of
Lutherans?

Johannes. A light man's jests die
in the ears of Mars.

Cuddie. I'm wretchedly abused if I
must die

Because some kiss a virgin's
painted toe.

Matthäus. The eyes of childhood
guess why we should fight.

Cuddie. Should I return, I may
keep one or none,

Or worse than all a third above
the brow,

A Cyclop mighty only in my
wounds.

Matthäus. There is no more to
say.

Cuddie. Thus in their ease and
comfort old grey-beards

Wave us to death. You wrinkle,
cup in hand,

And buzz before a fire, when we
return

With more holes on our face than
honeycombs.

Matthäus. That must be if it must.

Cuddie. To carry lances chapped
hands never sought,

And die to please invisibilities?

Be justified by faith and works,
and help

The useless epicurian poltroonize.

Matthäus. That may not be.

Cuddie. Bid them, I beg you, sirs,
to let me go.

Matthäus. You may not stay.

Cuddie. Where not? Above the
earth? Will Cuddie lie

Like any breathless creature
underground?

Matthäus. Learn to fight well; that
is your present school.

Cuddie. If I behold one naked
enemy,

I'll shriek and heavily becrap my
seat,

As I do here.

1 Soldier. Foh! Filthy knave!

2 Soldier. Foh! Filthy, stinking
knave!

3 Soldier. Beat him, or make him
go.

Cuddie. Unhand me, sirs, at once;
I am a priest.

2 Soldier. What kind? A
nauseating Lutheran?

Cuddie. No, a far holier one, and
best to know,

A hairy priest of Bacchus, as you
see.

1 Soldier. Give to a coward fool a
helmet brave.

3. Soldier. Take him.- Resistance?
Turn him upside-down.

Cuddie. I march with shoe of steel
on frightened head.

Exeunt soldiers carrying Cuddie

Johannes. Is this religion? Deadly
fooleries!

Matthäus. We smell the horrid,
putrifying flesh

Of the three-way-split evangelical
Church of the day. What of your
post? Quite safe?

Johannes. No, I prognosticate for
my own self

Fear, shakings, noise, a heavy
tuneless drum,

Not the light heart that often has
played with

The jangling music of the popish
scorn.

Matthäus. Mathematicians of two
emperors

Adhering to the Augsburg bargain,
hold,

I hope, but a child's reason in
their fear.

Johannes. I often tremble even
with my own.

I am denied communion in the
church

Of Württemberg.

Matthäus. Why?

Johannes. Because I do not lift my
hands and shout

That popes are antichrist. Who
should not make

Of his own groaning music, voice,
and text?

Matthäus. Plead to the university.

Johannes. To our immodest
chancellor I have

Appealed, to be immodestly
denied.

Thus I prognosticate for the new
year

Of sixteen-nineteen, graceless of
all times:

I know a neuter-gendered animal
Resplendent in the roses, looking
at

Its enemy. The milky blood that
gushed

From our lord's side to all
parishioners

Is soured, and we fit meat for
butcher knives.

Matthäus. As if we only meant to
say we live.

With what defeated sluggish
quiescence

Man goes, before the failing of the
light,

From sleeping chambers to the
wormy bed,

With prayers to undress his bones
in sleep!

Exeunt Johannes and Matthäus

Act 4. Scene 4. A street in
Heumaden. 1620

Enter Cuddie as a soldier

Cuddie. Ho, friends, fools,
comrades, fools, companions-in-
arms, more fools still! Is Cuddie
the soldier expected to charge
without arms and naked the
enemy alone? Is showing your
back backing? Did my mother
smile down at me and yield her
breast for this?

(An explosion is heard

Ha! Was that the foe or flatulence?

Ho, fellows, friends,
acquaintances, friends, citizens,
friends, shallow stocks, friends, is
Cuddie your whole war? Is one
man alone to save your thatched
rooftops from fire, spare
runaways hiding in your cellars,
keep enemies at bay from larder
and buttery? A corpse is the
silliest sight in all the world. All
fools if Cuddie be your redeemer!
Ho, filthy fools-at-arms, filthy
madmen-at-arms, filthy
vacillators-at-arms, filthy
drunkards-at-arms, filthy, filthy,
filthy-

Enter soldiers

How are you, great and loving
friends?

1 Soldier. Here, take this.

Cuddie. What is this thing?

1 Soldier. A firearm, fool, to kill
your enemies.

Cuddie. In my anxieties, I'll shoot
at you

More often than on them. Reflect
on this:

Is it not safer for us all if I

Be safely shut in prison?

2 Soldier. Right, to be hanged
afterwards.

Cuddie. I'll ply my musket instead.

3 Soldier. Aim at the foe, my
friend, that would be best.

Cuddie. Well reminded.

1 Soldier. What noise is that? The enemy?

Cuddie. (shooting)
I'll kill them all.

2 *Soldier.* Ha! Ha! He has shot me on my right thigh.

3 *Soldier.* Ha! Are you mad?

Cuddie. You were well warned, I guess.

Exeunt 1 and 3 Soldier carrying 2
Soldier, enter Mustapha

O, my master, my fine master, my fine and loving master, great welcome to greatest Mustapha from the trembling mouth of a cursed, weary, famished, bleeding, filthy, dishevelled soldier.

Mustapha. Rise. Do you weep?

Cuddie. Take me away. Rise as my savior still.

Mustapha. My Cuddie loathes the world and seeks to flee.

Cuddie. I'm blinded and cut off in fear and hate.

A poor man's smoky vision of the world

Is necessarily untrue, because

He is not asked to stoke it. Only you,

The rich, can hope to hold its shadowed form.

Mustapha. But you must earn the right to live with me.

Let me first question you politically.

Cuddie. Good students answer what good teachers say.

Mustapha. The old emperor, Matthias, has died. Who succeeded him?

Cuddie. I cannot know; I only bled for him.

Mustapha. Ferdinand the Second, his cousin, elected in Frankfurt last year.

Cuddie. Good.

Mustapha. Who leads the Bohemians?

Cuddie. I cannot know; I only felt their blows.

Mustapha. The Bohemians, conferring royal dignity on Elector Friedrich the Fifth of the Palatinate, son-in-law to James the First of England, are led by Count Henrich Matthias Thurn. Who leads the new emperor's forces?

Cuddie. I bless wise answers in blind confidence.

Mustapha. Emperor Ferdinand the Second has persuaded Maximilian, duke of Bavaria, to lead his forces. The duke's army first entered Linz, on his way to break Bohemia to its knees.

Cuddie. Good.

Mustapha. More matter worthy to be known: Friedrich of Bohemia has been decisively beaten at White Mountain, outside of Prague, and escaped as a winter king to Holland, a battle won by the baron of Tilly over Count Matthias Thurn and Prince Christian Anhalt-Bernberg, while Maximilian of Bavaria has entered Prague, sacking that great city

with his imperial army. And so you see the war is ended, and you almost killed for nothing.

Cuddie. Good.

Mustapha. To refresh your state from utmost penury, I should give you one hundred guilders. Here is the money.

Cuddie. O, my good master!

Mustapha. Yet hold. I begin to waver, even after cursory examination, concerned with the ultimate benefit derivable from my gift.

Cuddie. Why?

Mustapha. In strict philosophical terms, I doubt whether to give you one hundred guilders is the wisest use I can make of them.

Cuddie. One hundred guilders represent superfluous beer-froth on skeptic beard and lips, but death-in-abeyance necessity to me, for, unless I receive one hundred guilders or an equivalent amount, I may not eat today, and, if I quit the wars, I have no place to stay and sleep.

Mustapha. True, Cuddie, but many deep philosophers of east or west may to your detriment affirm that, like a gardener hired in the house of knowledge, I may fructify the use of one hundred guilders to a greater breadth of fortune's trees of happiness than is generally possible in a poorer one.

Cuddie. I agree, master, that the one hundred guilders may be used

to better purpose, and yet without them I may starve.

Mustapha. But you have not yet demonstrated why I should give you the one hundred guilders, for my one hundred guilders may prevent a hundred men from starving.

Cuddie. That, too, is doubtful.

Mustapha. It is, Cuddie.

Cuddie. The careful thinker concludes that everything may be doubted: historic observation, moral law, and scientific demonstration, acknowledging no fundamental principle we must obligatorily adhere to.

Mustapha. In a Pyrrhonian sense, or manner of extreme doubting, that statement is doubtful, for if we say: "everything is doubtful," that statement may be doubted.

Cuddie. And therefore we assert that if everything may be doubted, nothing can become doubtful, insofar as doubting that everything is doubtful makes everything certain. Therefore, to promote a greater degree of general happiness, first posited to be doubtful and then not, I should get the one hundred guilders.

Mustapha. I doubt that.

Cuddie. Have we not accepted that if we doubt everything, we doubt nothing?

Mustapha. A false conclusion, Cuddie, because that statement may be doubted as well.

Cuddie. We therefore conclude that the opinion "everything is doubtful" is false, insofar as it may be doubted, and because it is doubted, some things may be true and others false.

Mustapha. I doubt that, too. You will not obtain the one hundred guilders, but food and bed as my new secretary.

Cuddie. My wisest master!

Exeunt Mustapha and Cuddie

Act 4. Scene 5. A street in
Heumaden. 1620

Enter Johannes Kepler and
Matthäus Wackher von
Wackenfels

Johannes. My nerves are shot to pieces with concern
And buried in the grave of my sad thoughts.

Matthäus. More on your mother?

Johannes. The chief council of the ducal chancery has ordered her arrest. She is imprisoned at Leonberg, to be diligently examined on forty-nine theological articles while confronted with her accusers. Should she plead not guilty, she will immediately be stretched on the rack, an old woman's body gleaming in a horrid sweat.

Matthäus. To Leonberg! For the supposed witch

I fear much, for you more. To resurrect

Despair and pull him shrieking from his shroud

In joy, the body's recondite perhaps,

Must be the object of our daily work.

Exeunt Johannes and Matthäus

Act 4. Scene 6. A street in
Leonberg. 1620

Enter Caleb with a coffer and
Luther Einhorn

Caleb. No money?

Luther. No, Jew, I need more time to pay you back.

Caleb. Excuses are the naked beggars whom

Wise dealers spurn with foot.

Luther. You hold me by the throat, stout Hercules,

As firmly as when he Achelous pressed

To earth, and, breaking off his captive horn,

Spread much abundance. So do citizens

Bestow to fruitful-headed usurers, Of whom I hope you form a company.

Caleb. I'll seize from you securities instead.

Luther. Which pledges will you take?

Caleb. This first.

Luther. My hat?

Caleb. Yes.

Luther. My chain?

Caleb. Yes.

Luther. My shoes?

Caleb. Yes.

Luther. My cloak?

Caleb. Yes.

Luther. My shirt?

Caleb. Yes.

Luther. My breeches?

Caleb. Hum, hah, huh, grr.

Luther. O, slavery and death!

Exit Luther and enter 3 Jews

Caleb. What do you think, my friends? Are these worth much?

(They look at the items

Examine carefully each item: is
The hat in fashion nowadays or
not?

How heavy is the chain? Is it pure
gold?

Can these shoes crush at once
insolvent fools?

Can his cloak hold off wintry
Austrian winds?

Does his shirt have some stitches
here and there?

1 Jew. Tomorrow we will tell.

Caleb. Good.

2 Jew. We understand, resourceful
Caleb, why

You flow more fully than you did
before.

Caleb. And so do I.

3 Jew. We may yet in Vienna soon
admire

A synagogue. Will you not
contribute

To that great aim and hope for life
in life?

Caleb. A synagogue? Why? To keep
sheep in it,

As bushy as your beards, or beds
of lice?

(He chases them away

Pay for a synagogue? No, stab me
first

On sharpest candelabrum.

Enter 3 beggars

Who are these now?

1 Beggar. A rout of beggars, Caleb.
We know you.

Caleb. No, you do not, for
otherwise your hands
Would not stretch idly on a
holiday.

2 Beggar. Some charity!

3 Beggar. A little charity!

Caleb. What would you do with
money?

1 Beggar. If I had money, I would
eat today.

Caleb. Put this inside your bag.

1 Beggar. One small coin?

Caleb. Eat that.

Exit 1 Beggar

What would you do?

2 Beggar. Give it to my poor
father, so that he

May eat today.

Caleb. Put this inside your bag.

2 Beggar. One small coin?

Caleb. Let him eat that.

Exit 2 Beggar

Caleb. And you?

3 Beggar. I would invest it in a silly scheme,

By which a fool or two a million win,

And thousands more a thousand million lose.

Caleb. I empty coffers in your tiny bag.

3 Beggar. Ha, coins seen copulating in my sight!

Caleb. Take all and may these multiply for all.

Exit 3 Beggar

What do you say, rich beggar, to my proof?

A man needs no religion to be good.

Exit Caleb

Act 5. Scene 1. The court-house in
Güglingen. 1621

Enter Johann Ulrich Aulber and
Hobnot

Johann. Let us see whether truth
can be plucked out,
With help from Hobnot, from a
woman's breast,

Our Hobnot, hangman with the
finer touch

And style, unknown as yet in
Güglingen.

Hobnot. I thank you.

Johann. Of Hobnot many wish
they have not heard,

Or most especially felt.

Hobnot. I thank them. Some have
named me king of chain

And rope, an emperor in spikes
and wheels,

Great captain of strappadoes,
doctor of

Most awful suffering, of deep-felt
burns

The master and the secretary.

Johann. Deservedly bestowed.
From Leonberg

We have obtained word that a
woman swears

Of witchcraft she knows nothing.
Innocence

Uncertainly with hand on lips
walks forth.

Hobnot. How, innocence!

Johann. Which may be doubted,
as our colleague has,

The probing Einhorn. Howsoever,
sir,

Hot irons should plead for or else
against.

Hobnot. Here are her sons, I
think.

Enter Johannes and Cristoph
Kepler

Johannes. We come to comfort a
dear mother's fears.

Johann. That may not be.

Johannes. Our mother, kept at gloomy tower gate

On used straw, clapped in chains,
so that to scratch

Becomes a problem in geometry.

Johann. A magistrate upholds no favorite.

We will examine her beliefs with care.

Johannes. O, master, this is what we fear the most.

Johann. Why should you fear if she be innocent?

Cristoph. We do not doubt or fear that you will wring

The surest truth from her.

Johann. For Katharina Kepler's sake I hope

That may be hoped for.

Johannes. More terrors and afflictions!

Johann. The only prisoners who need fear are

Those who in fear seek to blot out clear truth.

Johannes. I'll scrape and wash my knees in their own blood

Until our duke grants mercy in this case.

Johann. We will await his answer.

Exeunt Johann and Hobnot

Johannes. A mother groaning in her senseless chains

With worse than senseless keepers at her side!

Cristoph. And what consumes my heart is that they sit

At our expense beside a goodly fire.

Johannes. And she allowed to freeze in shadows!

Cristoph. O, every hour we lose good money.

Johannes. Is it the money that concerns you most?

Cristoph. No, this: if they cannot distinguish truth,

We may be stretched and ground to pasties, too.

Johannes. More arguments to gargle on with dread!

Cristoph. Let her be tortured for my money.

Johannes. O, this, O this- I can sustain no more.

Cristoph. Will you sink now? The duke may yet disarm

With kindness what these men prepare for her.

Johannes. True. I conceive, to give our mother life.

Cristoph. I will see whether I may yet persuade

With more gold coins her keepers to be kind

To an old mother, our wet-pated chick

With open beak uncertain in her nest.

Johannes. Whose painful habitation may yet be

More comfortable than that other house

She is invited in, I mean her grave.

Cristoph. Come, will you go?

Johannes. I will, my Cristoph. So, to horse with speed!

But what will I think of along the way?

Cristoph. Think of lost money every day to spur

Your courser on.

Johannes. No, I will study to be patient like

Old stoics smiling as they grieve in fire.

Cristoph. Well thought on!

Johannes. I wrote a book of patience of my own.

Cristoph. Is it your "Harmony of the worlds"?

Johannes. In my "Harmony of the worlds", I show that the cube of the ratio between two planets' distance from the sun equals the square of the ratio between their rotation periods.

Cristoph. Good.

Johannes. Huh, does the sneering cynic wave his hand?

Some say: "The man has ice-floes for a heart,

And sciences make him ridiculous,"

But I aver to all who know and love:

To work out pain in thinking of no pain

Is sovereign against our melancholy.

Cristoph. You think aright.

Johannes. I think in mazes to avoid the house

Where thinking nothing is my blank despair.

Cristoph. You have considered much.

Johannes. I plunder on Egyptian silver bowls

Where planets are inscribed. Enthusiasm

Roars in my mathematic signs like fire.

The circle is to a straight line

What trumpets are to soldiers,

Or holidays to peasants.

My soul is not transformed by Mercury

Arising in the seventh house

In quadratures to Mars,

But by the writings of Copernicus

And Brahe burning, otherwise dark star

In dark oblivion lost.

Cristoph. High meditations easing our distress!

Exeunt Johannes and Cristoph

Act 5. Scene 2. A torture-chamber in Gülingen. 1621

Enter Johann Ulrich Aulber and Hobnot

Johann. Are all our instruments in readiness?

Hobnot. They seem to sweat but to begin new work,

The sadder remnants of past prisoners.

Johann. Be merciful to truth and not to her,

For truth we love, though bloody in her birth.

Hobnot. I'll be her midwife.

Johann. The prisoner's accusers keep long hours in our chamber, enduring the cold in hope of nudging her in heat.

Hobnot. I seem to hear their heavy noiseless steps

In haste from wall to wall in the next room.

Johann. We have studied with diligence the deposition of these accusers and find them convincing here and there in some very indeterminate parts.

Hobnot. Let the prisoner speak or squeak, so long as she gives birth from the mouth to some little baby-truth a long time blubbering on our bed of ropes. My Berta and I will search her bowels for such a trembling embryo this day, I promise you.

Johann. I do not doubt that. But who is Berta?

Hobnot. The name I have given to this gear.

Enter Ursula Reinbold and Urban Kräutlin

Ursula. Is it done? Are we happy?

Johann. We hourly expect the duke's decision.

Ursula. Likely to be wise and good, but more especially wise.

Johann. We recognize in him the sagest conductor of any dukedoom known in Europe.

Urban. No doubt. Who will bring us the news?

Johann. Baron Matthäus Wackher von Wackenfels, advisor to the emperor.

Ursula. A friend to Johannes Kepler, her son. I do not like that.

Urban. Let him plead. Should pleading carry it, we plead in vain.

Johann. Hobnot, go see whether this messenger has arrived.

Hobnot. I will, master.

Enter Matthäus Wackher von Wackenfels

I need not go. He comes in haste.

Matthäus. A letter for you, master Hobnot.

Johann. Our servant is Hobnot; my name is master Aulber.

Matthäus. Your pardon, good master Aulber.

Johann. Give me the letter.

Matthäus. May its whiteness proclaim new innocence on earth.

Ursula. No, glorious truth, only that.

Johann. The duke declares that the opinion of the judicial faculty at the University of Tübingen is upheld in this instance, maintaining that the Kepler woman should be shown instruments of torture in presence of the executionner: the rack and the garotte, the branding irons, needles, pincers, and ropes, every part of his trade, but suffer none of them.

Matthäus. The duke has spoken.

Johann. The wise are silent.

Exeunt Ursula and Urban

Go, Hobnot; hale with vigor our fearfulest guest. Truth may yet be gleaned, though the ground seems dry and brittle.

Hobnot. Especially after rainfall of the eyes.

Exit Hobnot

Matthäus. Be merciful.

Johann. I'm merciful to her victims, if she had any.

Matthäus. It matters little if a hundred murderers go free, provided innocence's garments lie untouched.

Johann. What if a hundred innocent prisoners choke? They climb on their rope towards a higher justicer. No guilty villain may go free, lest we ruin a good world.

Matthäus. We presume that the guilty are innocent.

Johann. We presume that the innocent are guilty.

Matthäus. Cruelty disguised as justice!

Johann. Injustice disguised as mercy!

Matthäus. Justice? A puny giant killing unknowingly.

Johann. Mercy? A colored viper killing secretly.

Matthäus. Be lenient and expect to your own hopes a tastier pear

than clemency, with greater benefits no earthly gardener can devise or guess.

Exit Matthäus, enter Hobnot and Katharina Kepler

Johann. Is it the witch?

Hobnot. It is.

Johann. How many men have you desiccated?

Katharina. I assure you, good master Aulber, none.

Johann. A woman hides truth more earnestly than her bush and buttocks. We see mushroom troops of grooms daily transformed into filthy bits of straw, beggars in your parish streets. We have watched you with horror do this to them.

Katharina. No. I never learned how.

Johann. You may only have intended to hurt them, but to a witch one malicious thought is sufficient for a multitude of good persons to grieve, with loathing of their lives. Stand here. Our authority protects us from the secret wiles of witches and bad women.

Katharina. This cold room I know, where stand even colder men within.

Johann. Your prison garment is too thin. Unless you speak the entire truth at last, you'll soon be warmer, but not in any way you'll like.

Katharina. Ah, my not-to-be-rid-of-never-ending terrors!

Hobnot. Good, good.

Johann. An innocent woman afraid? Come, speak truthfully, so that we may sleep this night for once.

Katharina. What can you wish to know I have not told?

Johann. You have like a mannish sorceress in Ursula Reinbold's belly planted a cruel seed. Release her from sickness.

Katharina. I did not harm her, nor did I ever wish to.

Johann. Did you administer to her and to her neighbors soothing draughts that kill?

Katharina. Never.

Johann. Show her the wheel.

Katharina. O, mercy!

Hobnot. Barbara can break arms and legs, Barbara can like willows bend them.

Katharina. Mercy! Ah, ah!

Johann. In tears truths flower.

Katharina. Ah, ah, ah, ah!

Hobnot. A son's wife breaks the mother's arm holding him, and that is well, for otherwise his self is entirely his mother's all life long, but this she can break limbs in a crueller fashion, making them, like sleeves on an unworn cloak, more pliant than your tales.

Johann. Will you speak better with more truths?

Katharina. I have told everything ten times or more.

Johann. Show her the rack.

Katharina. Still mercy!

Hobnot. Berta can stretch a woman's bones to wires.

Katharina. Ah, ah, ah, ah!

Johann. Admit you slept with Satan.

Katharina. No, no.

Hobnot. Berta delivers truths while sparing few, and with ropy hands indifferent to yelling.

Johann. No more words?

Katharina. I'm stifled in a foggy fear.

Johann. Show her the iron tooth; demonstrate its uses.

Hobnot. If the others do not, Susanna can spur your tongue to miraculous gallops.

Katharina. Ah, ah, ah, ah!

Hobnot. The second wife bites a mother's hopes more sharply than the first. I assure you, iron pierces, and some have wept before my shiny face at the discovery.

Johann. Hobnot can play cruel music on all organs.

Hobnot. May my face drizzle with sweat together with your blood, should truth lie sleeping in a world unknown.

Katharina. Let me catch my breath; I'll say something, say something, something.

Hobnot. Is this not well, master?

Johann. We are winning, Hercules; the hydra of lies is vomiting her away.

Katharina. And yet my something may be your nothing.

Johann. Is witchcraft the most cherished of your sciences?

Katharina. No.

Johann. Tell me the truth and hope.

Katharina. My only hope is not to hope.

Johann. A magistrate, not yet unkind enough,

Adjures you to repent and cheat our foe,

The always naked tempter of deep lusts,

For otherwise some fearful, horrid pains

Are likely to ensue.

Katharina. The age of iron breathes.

Johann. You will need all your healing salves today.

Katharina. Pull out vein after vein, and flesh from bone,

For I have nothing richer to confess.

Johann. Now, Hobnot, set her free.

Hobnot. Ha!

Johann. Come, are you fainting?

Hobnot. In joy, good master.

Katharina. Free? Free? What is that word?

Johann. Catch the bewildered fool.

Hobnot. I hold her, master.

Johann. Will you both fall? Unsteady?

Hobnot. My master, we have done well, I think. We are today witnesses to a small part of glory

on this earth, for innocence in not speaking has spoken certainly.

Johann. That may be so.

Hobnot. A triumph for the law!

A triumph for our master Aulber!

Enter Luther Einhorn

Luther. A triumph? How?

Johann. She is released.

Luther. Oh, no!

Johann. She is, Luther; your opinions on this case have to the utmost reach of capable knowledge been proven entirely wrong.

Luther. Ah, ah!

Johann. The duke declares that the trial costs should be paid by the Keplers, the Reinbolds, and by Luther Einhorn. No peer in Austria and Styria can speak with clearer sun-like judgment, overlying all the world except the dark streams of empty Eurebus.

Luther. A second time I'll become a Jew's slave weeping on my oar.

Johann. Well deserved.

Luther. With peace of mind, I'll pocket tribulations, To pay them back in virtuous meditations.

Johann. Well.

Exit Luther

Katharina. Should I return to Leonberg? I will

Be torn to pieces in my neighbors' love.

Hobnot. Go, or else stay. We love
the stench of you,
For through your garment's
windows justice sits,
To look out on the world with
confidence.

Exeunt Johann, Hobnot, and
Katharina

Act 5. Scene 3. A street in Linz.
1626

Enter Caleb, Mustapha, and Cuddie

Caleb. England first chose to rid
itself of our industrious tribes,
followed by France and Spain. We
are allowed to live in few cities of
Europe. But since the beginnning
of squirmishes between rival
Christian factions and of battles
fruitlessly plowing fruitful ground,
we rise, we spread. A few hundred
in Prague, and then perhaps a few
thousand, and then perhaps a few
million. Maximilian of Bavaria
with his imperial army sacked
Prague, but, in his need of money,
refused to enter Jew city, since
which day, I laugh at fools with
bankers and with merchants.

Mustapha. And you no less than
most.

Caleb. With millions richer. Daub
your lips and chin
With grease of Christians' baneful
enmity,
Fat sausage thick with mustards of
despair.

Mustapha. You lend them money
for the armements?

Caleb. All these and more, much
more. There is no part
Of commerce, out or in, I have
not probed
With golden fingers, to the
darkest depts
Of her wide buttocks.

Mustapha. Most excellent. While
many starve, you swell.

Caleb. To roundnesses unthought
of yet by priests.

Mustapha. Some say the hiring of
general count Albrecht von
Wallenstein in the imperial troops
will make of our lasting pains
briefer wars.

Caleb. I count on him. Peace I have
courted, too,
As any page his mistress. Will you
leave?

Mustapha. I should, while these
bombarbments last.

Linz is invaded: what else can I
say?

I am for quiet and my bowl of
wine.

Caleb. It is prohibited to you, but I
Sin worse in my own creed.
Reserve for me

A seat in hell if ever you expire.

Mustapha. Our final bargain
sealed!

Cuddie. Belief in hell creates a
people's hell.

Mustapha. Which Lutherans,
denying purgatory,
In folly hug and purr to their own
breast.

Both flatter us that their true god,
unjust
In life, may yet be perfect in the
next.

Caleb. Lies are the salad of
divinity,
Assuring good digestion of half-
truths.

Cuddie. Where will we go, unholy
mullah?

Mustapha. I thought at first to
France, but now the French
Grow hateful to my placid pagan
eyes.

Richelieu, that wily unroman
cardinal, defender of his people
not faith, encourages Christian the
Fourth of Denmark on the
Lutheran side to invade Habsburg
territories.

But then, my friends, why should I
be surprised?

He is a priest: imposture is his
guide.

Caleb. The Danish king, we hear,
is beaten by the baron of Tilly.

Cuddie. We must escape, if only
because of the peasant rebellion.

Mustapha. True, the Fadinger
revolts scare me worse than a
thousand warring kings.

Caleb. Senseless frights! The
peasant troops, we hear, are
already slaughtered by count
Peppenheim of the imperial
forces.

Mustapha. A greater famine likely
will ensue.

Caleb. The rich are quiet stoics
when men shrink.

Mustapha. Am I banished by Mars'
clamor? I care little. In every
country there is food and water,
and woman with her slit.

Cuddie. I'll bake our dough of
sloth and fornication
With goodly relish.

Enter peasants

Hide me, good master. My own
kind I sweat
To see in gentlest slumber.

Mustapha. Ho, do not fear. You
are my own again.

Cuddie. What are they seeking?

Mustapha. Food, not more men.

(The peasants look inside doors
and destroy property)

Cuddie. When peasants enter here,
here I do not
Exist or know myself, except in
turd,

Which I will rather banquet on
than fight.

Caleb. Turn towards influence
your head of paste.

Mustapha. If they recover you, I'll
buy you back.

Cuddie. Thanks to my saviors.

Mustapha. Here we find in sick
puddles frogs afloat,
Cold remnants of what peasants
may devour.

Cuddie. Were I a fly in them.

Exeunt peasants

Mustapha. Man is a rusty key,
which on the lock
Of peace breaks in his filth and
tawdriness.

Caleb. Unless I quite mistake a
human face,
Which I so rarely do, these men of
stone,
Whose first progenitor Deucalion
should
Have dropped in muck and trash,
belong in full
To a fair captain quite down on
his luck,
Who owes me money. I will follow
them,
And then poke at the hive where
my thugs stir,
A mightier host no country ever
knew,
Who buzz in debtors' ears: "Gaze
at the sun
No more, sad zanies, sweat but for
the Jew,
But for the Jew on boulders break
your nails,
Lest bees in your ease sting a lazy
fool
With sharp zeal towards law-
courts, jails, and death."

Exit Caleb

Mustapha. Where may I not turn?
Money is adored
In holiest churches, synagogues,
and mosques.

Cuddie. Too many fear and loathe
a turbaned head.

Mustapha. To those, unlike my
usual mode of thought,
I sell the smoke of cooked meat,
not the meat.

Cuddie. You do well.

Mustapha. I yield to friends what I
from foes I steal.

Cuddie. Again well done.

Mustapha. Give me my old-yet-
new Coran, unmarked;
I cringe in finding frantic friends I
hate.

Cuddie. Here.

Enter 3 Arabs with clubs

Mustapha. (reading
Infinity of wisdom on one hand!

1 Arab. Mere mockery!

Mustapha. Sir, you disturb
profound and lasting dreams
In studious meditation on
themselves.

2 Arab. He laughs at us.

Mustapha. He may not curse
where kindness shines so clear.

3 Arab. Beat him.

(3 Arab chases Cuddie away, while
1 and 2 Arabs beat Mustapha to
death

Re-enter Cuddie

Cuddie. O, my poor master! Killed?
Cuddie is alone. I return a
shepherd, poor and needy,
forgotten of the world. O, my kind
master! I'll raise poisoned sheep
to feed all believers. Ha! Ha! Ha!

Ha! Ha! Live, master, with my foul
revenges. Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

Enter Johannes Kepler with a
manuscript and violets

Johannes. Is dying Austria
laughing at her dead?

Cuddie. No, laughing loudly when
a soldier weeps

For dying comrades willing many
times

To die for emperors and dirt.

To whom do you bestow these
flowers?

Johannes. My mother.

Cuddie. Dead?

Johannes. Released from her cold
dungeon, she survived

For a few months, no more.

Cuddie. What are you now?

Johannes. As chief mathematician
in the court

Of Emperor Ferdinand, I live or
die.

Cuddie. Prosperity avoids your
sight, I fear.

Johannes. But what offends worse
than neglect in state

My mind is that my pen has
caught a cold

And sleeps anidiomatically.

Cuddie. In these war-times, what
fruitful enterprise

Does not lie in her womb choked
and annulled?

Johannes. So long as I can read
and calculate,

Germanic lands may swill on beer
or blood.

Cuddie. I think unhappiness has
filled our land

Much like Grandazzo's crucifix,
which took

Up all the space in the entire
church,

So that surprised parishioners had
much

To do to find a seat and saw their
priest

Smile under Christ's armpits
encouragingly.

Johannes. I press my face on
violets, but my mind

Is shaded strangely with a
thousand more.

Cuddie. "Have patience," says the
stoic as he smiles.

Johannes. The stoic seeks
tranquillity of mind,

Considering pains unavoidable,
though

A likely source of good or good
disguised.

Cuddie. The epicurian likes me
best.

Johannes. The epicurian seeks all
pleasures and

Avoids all pains as the worst of all
crimes.

Cuddie. The cynic I hate worse of
all.

Johannes. The cynic voids his
nose at any pain

Or pleasure, each one swerving in
the curve

Of time but to the other.

Cuddie. Take what is best from
these philosophies.

Exit Cuddie carrying Mustapha and
enter Matthäus Wackher von
Wackenfels

Matthäus. Is it Johannes?

Johannes. Johannes, or his ghost.

Matthäus. Where are you going?

Johannes. Where all men go:
towards their grave.

Matthäus. But not today, I hope.

Johannes. Towards my mother's
and my final womb.

Matthäus. Are these your dear
Rudolphine tables?

Johannes. Rudolphine tables will
be printed soon

In Ulm at my expense. Lost sailors
will

Be glad to read them, lost
astronomers

Will bless my memory with better
books.

As in a vision I appear to see
Hipparchus, Ptolemy, Copernicus,
And Brahe living on its
frontispiece;

Mine is the visage at the desk
below,

Ungrateful coinage scattered right
and left,

Not on the table where I labor
hard.

Matthäus. Is genius never like
himself in grace,

Most happy in his gifts?

Johannes. The tables lack in spirit
sustentation

Buoyed in me for stay-at-home
voyages.

Matthäus. I'll follow you to dark
sides of the pit.

Johannes. Do it like Horus, with
one finger on

His placid mouth.

Matthäus. I like him best of all.

Johannes. Diminishers. Avulsion.

Exeunt Johannes and Matthäus

Act 5. Scene 4. A street in
Regensburg. 1630

Enter general Albrecht von
Wallenstein, attended by 1 Soldier

Albrecht. My horse's sweaty
hooves are purpurine.

The Lutherans reel backward from
our swords

And shields as readily as
Calvinists.

While Tilly spurns the Danish
king, we tilt

The prince of Transylvania from
his horse.

1 Soldier. Our German soldiers
laugh to find the Dane

And the Hungarian wading in their
gore.

Albrecht. The dukes of Pomerania
and of Mecklenburg,

Unfortunate in their alliances

With Danes, stand pale, negotiate,
and I

Received as the new duke of
Mecklenburg!

The faces of their stoutest are
compressed

Flat to the bone, some almost
featureless,
At best protuberances of hurt
flesh,
While others moan suspended like
pale pears
On trees from shrunken anklets.
Underneath,
Red juice drips slowly on the
leaves and moss,
The ruddy sprinkled on the green
and grey,
When we find time to work. Old
news and stale.

I Soldier. Your Ludwig died today,
some say.

Albrecht. My favorite, and what a
thing he was!

Our soldier, seeking for
voluptuousness

Where a sword has already cut it,
still

Avoiding at all costs the worst of
foes,

His mirror, sits on an old tomb
and mopes.

I Soldier. Place your bruised feet
on these soft cushions, sir.

Albrecht. Where frowns our starry
advisor?

Enter Johannes Kepler

You?

Johannes. At your command,
most potent general.

Albrecht. Well, well.

Johannes. If Rome once honored
with a triumph theirs
In reputation, fighting fiercely

And levelling revolted subjects,
shamed,

Secure in chains on charriots, why
may not

Brave Wallenstein receive
equivalent

Rewards for feats few have
attempted, none

Accomplished in our times?

Albrecht. My stars reveal I can
accomplish more.

Johannes. Few can doubt it.

Albrecht. If only from my stars I
could read more!

Disclose again what you from
stars can guess.

Johannes. Oh, nothing I have not
already told.

Albrecht. Repeat good hopes and
better: will I rise?

Johannes. Ha! Will you rise?
Prognostications of

Etruscan Tages were not surer to
The citadels of Latium.

Albrecht. Well, well. Yet here we
have disease and pests.

Johannes. Oh, all the better.
Aesculapius in

The form of a bright golden snake
snuffed out

The plague in Rome: what in our
modern times

May not imperial sapience yet
devise?

Albrecht. If we could read the
stars!

Johannes. How many worried men
in Europe wish

They could but read your mind,
my general!

There destiny, they say, smiles or else frowns.

Albrecht. Some say, I am the main defective hinge

That shuts the door of peace against our face.

Johannes. True.

Albrecht. If we could read the stars!

Johannes. O, I am sick. Hope totters blindly still.

Albrecht. Ha, sick, sick as most of your prophecies?

Enter 2 Soldier

Bad news, I fear.

2 *Soldier.* My general, brave Ludwig's dead.

Albrecht. Expected, yet no less- I can express

No more, expecting to be understood.

2 *Soldier.* My general, the college of electors have

Met, leaving you quite destitute of all,

Abandoned still by folly's emperor.

Albrecht. No more a general! How can I live,

Or even die?

Johannes. Ha, madness in our stars!

1 *Soldier.* Take comfort, sir.

Albrecht. My Ludwig, and my function!

O, why did you not die instead?

Exit 1 Soldier

I'm mad. No? Am I not?

Our Ludwig should be honored.

Johannes. I will praise him.

Albrecht. A glib tongue you possess, as do your stars, Tongues that can flatter princes in demise.

Johannes. I well may be unapt for elegies

As well as many other practices.

Albrecht. In war, he did not own, as many do,

Mars on his tongue, Thersites in his heart.

Johannes. No.

Albrecht. Can you say more?

Johannes. I can, yet I must practice first, I think.

His dog has died, they say. I'll practice skills

With moving epitaphs on his dead dog.

Albrecht. Well thought on!

Enter 3 Soldier bearing a dead dog

Johannes. O, let me swallow all of Hippocrene

Atop mount Helicon! This is a theme

Few can attempt and fewer yet achieve.

Albrecht. A fine beginning!

Johannes. Brave Ludwig's dog is dead, our Puff-ball gone!

Bad days, worse nights: the good die with the bad,

The good and bad remain. This was no dog,

But its idea! Puff-ball, when
 aroused,
 Was never heard to growl or bark
 aloud,
 Content with biting hard his
 master's arse.
 He neither pissed nor heavy
 biscuit dropped
 On his good mistress' gown;
 instead, he played
 As soldiers do, his master's, lifting
 up
 His hindlimbs as he briskly
 marched in tune,
 The little warrior with his master's
 cap.
 After explosions flashing right and
 left,
 When his good captain lost his
 arms and legs,
 Still on the ground, Puff-ball
 pulled at his trunk,
 Expecting to see his good master
 rise
 And frolic one more time. When
 he did not,
 Puff-ball stretched on the ground,
 pretending he
 Was dead, as many times he
 sported thus,
 But then he raised his head with
 sadder eyes
 While contemplating his still
 captain still.
 So, lying tristful, this fond dog
 grew faint,
 And, fainting, caught a chill; no
 longer did
 He eat but seemed to mourn
 beside the dead.

Alone, untended, with foul coat
 ungroomed,
 Puff-ball expired.- What, welling,
 general?

Albrecht. The breeze blows cold
 today. At a bad time

Has faithless Ferdinand
 abandoned me.

Bad emperor-

O, worse than bad, O, worse than
 worst men can

Describe and then expect to be
 believed!

For Gustav Adolph, king of
 Sweden comes

For him and his, and Sweden
 comes for blood.

Johannes. More of that still!

Albrecht. Not sick, Johannes?

Johannes. Yes, sick, and almost
 dead.

Albrecht. Go bury our dead
 soldier.

Exeunt Soldiers 2 and 3 bearing
 the dead dog

Johannes. More and then worse!
 Worse and then worst of all!

Albrecht. A good dog, Kepler.

Johannes. True.

Albrecht. A very good dog, my
 Johannes.

Exit Albrecht

Johannes. Diminishers. Avulsion.

Enter plague-stricken men

White mouths, to suck out
knowledge. Live in books,
So that the worms in them may
live on you.

I measured heavens' circuit; now I
read

For all eternity earth's shadowed
round.

(He dies

1 Man. I saw my brother leap into
the fire

Meant for my cousin's carcass.

2 Man. This looks like Kepler.

3 Man. Can scientists be eaten?

1 Man. I doubt that.

2 Man. With papers too well
stuffed.

3 Man. Yet what of that? Our
mouth is paper, too.

1 Man. Disguise yourselves as
priests and bury him

For a good fee, my best advice
today.

Exeunt plague-stricken men
bearing Johannes

King Henry III of France

Dramatic characters (16)

Charles IX, king of France
 Catherine de Medici, queen mother
 Henry of Anjou, duke, later King Henry III
 Henry of Guise, duke of Lorraine
 Charles of Lorraine, duke of Mayenne
 Henry of Navarre, king of Navarre
 Henry of Condé, prince and cousin to the king of Navarre
 Gaspard de Coligny, admiral of the Huguenot faction
 Ludovico Gonzaga, duke of Nevers
 Jean-Louis de La Valette, duke of Epemon
 Anne de Joyeuse, viscount and later duke of Joyeuse
 Pépin, Huguenot scholar
 Marie, wife to Pépin
 Crudmore, beggar
 Turpin, Crudmore's son
 Jacques Clément, Dominican friar

Soldiers, servants, Turpin's woman, the lord of Maurevert, Persephone and her suitors, Caylus' corpse, a shoemaker, a tinker, a water-carrier, and a barrel-maker

Time: 16th century

Place: France

Act 1. Scene 1. The Louvre in Paris. 1572

Enter the duke of Guise and Catherine de Medici

Catherine. Is there no earthquake grumbling deep below
 To swallow down dark heaven's renegades?

Guise. I'll be your earthquake.

Catherine. Do, do. Earn a queen-mother's gratitude.

Guise. I will devise a plot, whose like on earth

Was never seen, or even thought about.

Catherine. Make me your secret bedside book of woe.

Guise. The king proposes marriage with Navarre

And his unhappy sister.

Catherine. I know he does.

Guise. The Huguenots may hate that.

Catherine. Who says a woman better can beguile?

Men pluck down crown and laurel as they wish.

Guise. I know if Protestants ascend, we fall.

Catherine. Filth of the realm, threat to established ways.

Guise. They killed my father: I should kill them, too:

What can be simpler, gracious mother-queen,

To understand?

Catherine. The king defends assailants at the fort

Of Orange.

Guise. And desecrators of the sacrament

At Rouen, Calvin's merchants rightly dead,

Contempt's demolishers of pyramid

And crosses at the house of razed Gastines.

Catherine. He orders that the governor of Metz

Should make no difference between religion

And novelties. Too lukewarm for my blood!

Guise. I'll marry murder with duplicity,

Whose offspring will in full rejoice your heart.

Catherine. Our prophet of revenge against revolts!

Guise. I will be more than prophet of your joys:

A church-born flayer of apostasy.

A Huguenot, to scare his child asleep,

Will whisper no more: "Devils come for you

In darkness if your eyelids do not shut,"

But rather: "Close your eyes, lest black the Guise

Haul disobedient spirits shrieking to

Fresh open graves."

Catherine. Be secretive; reveal to none your thoughts.

Guise. Am I the Guise? Am I who I must be?

Catherine. It would be tedious and too over-long

Once to thumb over all the catalogues

Of sin that must be answered with their blood.

Guise. Coligny might not have my father's head

Lopped off, but I will do as if he did.

Catherine. Louis of Condé planned to steal away,

While I for peace beseeched, the king at Meaux.

Guise. With dazzled fools I do not often jest.

Catherine. What do you call religion with no thought

On guided penance, priesthood paid for saws

Without due ordination, confirmation,

A stillborn bastard best forgotten still?

Guise. Coligny's mouth is much reformed but not

His purse, as critics may allow when he

Obtains ecclesiastic prebends from

His brother, Châtillon, though dead awhile,

Remuneration to be pocketed

From a religion he abhors and loves.

Catherine. My Henry, man at Jarnac in full pride

And savior in the fields of Moncontour,

May be a better son for my conceits,

Against the royal council's hopes
of truce
Caressed by Montmorency and de
Mesme.

Guise. We'll prove uncertain
dreams of peace to be
As halting as mild Gontaut-Biron's
gait.

Catherine. God's honor is our
cause. The Huguenots
May not be borne. That being
done, I'll dream
Of Henry's marriage with the
English queen.

Exeunt the Guise and Catherine de
Medici

Act 1. Scene 2. Before the
cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris.
1572

Enter King Charles IX, the duke of
Anjou, the king of Navarre, and
the prince of Condé, attended by
servants

Charles IX. There's feasting on this
day among the good:
A marriage-pact between two
kingdoms grown.

Navarre. A marriage-bond
between religions, too.

Charles IX. At last we clasp our
wish and to our state
That wish must be acclaimed as
fortunate:
The marriage of my sister,
Margaret

Of Valois, and Navarre at Notre-
Dame.

Navarre. The tomb of our
religious enmities,
And we the figures on the
monument,
Together with gisants of peace in
France.

Anjou. A catafalque the people in
our realm

Religiously expect to kneel before.

Navarre. Love smiles propitiously
and without guile.

In golden satin France and Anjou
shine,

Like twin suns reigning over Paris
streets.

Charles IX. The dazzled bride in
purple velvet gown
Embroidered with fresh lilies,
gladdening

The sight of her well-wishers!

Navarre. And yet, you know, this
celebration is

No sacrament to our reformed
religion.

Condé. The bridegroom with his
followers will stand
Outside while king and bride
rejoice within.

Enter Catherine de Medici and the
duke of Guise

Catherine. In honor of your
marriage day, Navarre,
I have forgotten black, since all
my thoughts
Shine like a cloth of innocence
this day.

Charles IX. More blessings on their happiness!

Navarre. More signs of favor on our amities!

Charles IX. This blessed event, which follows closely

The marriage of Prince Condé to Marie

Of Clèves, loved sister-in-law to the Guise,

Is double binding of our mutual love

And end to all dissensions. Ha, the Guise,

Is it not so?

Guise. So.

Charles IX. We have in our fond heart no greater hope

Of happiness than to behold at last

The old religion with the newer one

Serenely kiss in soft bonds of peace.

Exeunt Charles IX, Catherine de Medici, Anjou, and the Guise, attended

Navarre. We celebrate our newer Paris mass

While muttering in fear inside dark caves.

Condé. The treaty, once a bride at Saint Germain,

Is now a garish whore.

Navarre. The Spanish agents murdered without fear

The count of Egmont and the count of Hoorn.

Condé. Last month, French troops were crushed at Saint Ghislain.

Help our insurgent and despairing friends

Of the Low-Countries in their heady war

Against the miserable tyranny

Of the fierce duke of Alba.

Navarre. I have asked France for money in our wars

At Flanders and obtain the promises

Of money. With foot-soldiers and horsemen

I'll join the prince of Orange.

Condé. We keep as sacraments communion

And baptism-

Navarre. Deny that prayers for the dead refresh

A grimy sinner roaring in his fire.

Condé. Swear that Saint Roch is powerless to cure

Even the milder forms of flatulence.

Navarre. No priests but deacons, not the popish beast

But a consistory.- Can Anjou help?

Condé. The duke of Anjou is a girl-like boy.

Exeunt Navarre and Condé

Act 1. Scene 3. A street in Paris.
1572

Enter the duke of Anjou and the duke of Guise

Guise. A union born in Satan's head, so that
One half of France may burn the other one!

Anjou. Pope Gregory and Francis Alençon

Are of my mind: an insult to our God,
A deadly peril to all souls in France.

Guise. My uncle could not from the surly pope
Obtain a dispensation for this bond.

Anjou. What can this marriage breed? No son of peace,
I fear. Margot once slept with me, with you

As well, some say.

Guise. Peace on forgotten sins!

Anjou. While Huguenots still rage in convent lusts.

Guise. The royal army in red helmets with

The white cross fierce against the paler heads

Of Huguenots in bloody fields of France:

I breathe but in that smoke.

Anjou. The king seduces well Coligny's hopes

While envying King Philip, envying You, of that liberty which most he lacks.

Guise. No king in his own house, much less the realm.

Exeunt Anjou and the Guise

Act 1. Scene 4. A street in Paris.

1572

Enter the king of Navarre, the prince of Condé, and admiral Coligny, attended

Coligny. We only gain what in a war is won.

Navarre. Behold what in a marriage is obtained.

Condé. What we have won tomorrow may be lost.

You have but married maybe.

Navarre. A woman, I hope, with a state in peace.

Coligny. What is kept up with power is torn down

With power. Catholics adore our God

And yet despise his worshippers to death.

Navarre. The king is lenient.

Coligny. Proceeding from his weakness, which may be

To their advantage wrought on.

Navarre. If traitors live, we are stout and full-grown.

Are you not, Condé?

Condé. I am a coach with one wheel. Being moved

Hurts me the more with those who rest in me.

Navarre. He is of one religion.

Condé. Why should two friends have one religion, or

One hope? As if we search reality With just one arm?

Navarre. Philosophy!

Coligny. A pretty game no doubt.

Navarre. What do you wish for, nephew?

Condé. But to transform my soul into a Louvre,

Where I am king and courtier, serving all,

Commanding all, both loving and beloved.

Coligny. More of the same.

Navarre. He's ours and noble.

Condé. O, neither noble nor ignoble,

And neither kind nor yet unkind,

Or neither well-taught nor untaught,

A tangle of silk-threads and weeds.

Coligny. His father died religiously.

Condé. I am a changeling to my own self,

Robbed from my bed by strangers I have known.

Enter the lord of Maurevert with an arquebus, above

Navarre. This way, Coligny.

Coligny. Ha, so it is.

(The lord of Maurevert shoots below and exits

Navarre. Ha!

Condé. Oh, Admiral Coligny has been shot.

Navarre. Not dead!

Condé. His left arm is transpierced, and there is more:

One finger blasted off his right hand.

Navarre. I think I spied the lord of Maurevert.

Condé. Charles de Louvriers!

Navarre. A private quarrel.

Condé. Believe so if you can or must.

Navarre. Ho! Send the admiral to surgeons' care.

Exeunt attendants, bearing Coligny

Condé. What times are these! What men command these times!

Navarre. Come. To the Louvre!

Condé. To be shot at again?

Navarre. The honor of the king has been engaged.

He may no more add "traitor" to his name

Than sit below a peasant robber's knee.

Exeunt Navarre and Condé

Act 1. Scene 5. A tennis court in Paris. 1572

Enter King Charles IX and the duke of Guise

Charles IX. All that I offer for their benefit

Comes back at me with pain.

Guise. Men's hopes are good when well kept within bounds.

Charles IX. I need no courtier in this second court,

For otherwise a king may not improve
His skill with such excessive courtesies.

Guise. I will put you to a good sweat, my king.

Charles IX. Consider each ball as a Huguenot
And rap him sorely against my feet.

Guise. I need not, knowing well your majesty
Can sharply punish any he can find.

Charles IX. I should especially hit those who stray
Outside the confines of the court, whom I
Can never reach.

Guise. I'll fetch them back, or crush them as they rest.

Charles IX. At our game's end, they'll lie well knocked, I'm sure.

Enter the prince of Condé

Condé. O, justice, justice, goodliest majesty!

Charles IX. Why?

Condé. Some rag of justice for our naked France!

Our admiral Coligny is laid low,
Shot by a Catholic.

Charles IX. Ah, no! Two fall assassinated here.

O, it is come, the day of reckoning
And doom in luckless France. Is Condé here

Or a bad dream? On lowliest dung-holes faint.

The musket-ball that struck the face of Mars

Has given us an even sharper blow.

Our sides ache at these news, our honor bleeds.

Condé. What peace can Huguenots expect from kings

Who murder us in secret while we feast?

Charles IX. Expect a murderer caught and attached,

Tried quickly, stretched to a band's length, until

The foam of every accomplice bleeds

From his pinched mouth, then hear him loudly wail

And hate each inspiration on the wheel.

Condé. Our tall Coligny is alive.

Guise. Alive?

Condé. Yes, duke, on his bed gasping painfully,

A surgeon's shadow over his pale face

As long as this sad day and longer night.

Charles IX. Inquiries will be made and suddenly.

Christophe de Thou will know of this event

And render us a full report or die.

Guise. Where is Navarre?

Condé. Where I am now, at the queen-mother's feet,

For any help in these extremities.

Charles IX. How well I am obeyed! Am I a king?

Can majesty's oil shine on a king's brow

When riot-mongers spit on it at will?

Condé. The Huguenots bear swords. This may not pass.

Charles IX. Go, justice you will cut and eat yourself

With satisfaction of all factions' hate.

Condé. In vengeance start to fear that Catholics

Will crush between their teeth a bloody fruit.

Exit Condé

Guise. I should proclaim at once my innocence.

Charles IX. You must and should.

Guise. My liege, this sad event, confusion's worst,

Is quite unlooked for.

Charles IX. Ah, I believe you.

Exeunt Charles IX and the Guise

Act 1. Scene 6. The Louvre in
Paris. 1572

Enter Catherine de Medici and the duke of Anjou

Catherine. The lord of Maurevert is the duke's man.

Anjou. How is it possible? A subject to

Command and overpeer like a stage-king?

Catherine. A fierce affront to the good king and me!

Anjou. I will remember him. The Guise jumps far

And to an awful precipice he'll sink,

Fit subject to make Crassus laugh in tears

Who barely smiled before.

Catherine. Speak to the king. This must be answered soon.

Anjou. He comes at last and breathing in his haste

For vengeance and redress.

Enter King Charles IX

Catherine. Clouds swell.

Anjou. Strike terror in the valleys without bolts

Of thunder, warning none of your approach.

Catherine. Let mountains rest like smoke and earth like mud.

Charles IX. My eyes are red from weeping and my ears

Hot from my subjects' curses. Honor's lost

Unless I punish in a dreadful sweat

Conspirators against our royal hopes.

I'll hold the scissors while bland Atropos

Cuts off legs with ambition.

Anjou. Some say: "The duke of Guise is much to blame."

Catherine. Although the duke of Guise is much to blame,

The duke of Guise is not an enemy

Of God and us.

Anjou. No? Then I recognize no friend on earth.

Catherine. His enemies are ours, and yet not ours
Because not dead.

Anjou. The Protestants are friends if they obey.

Catherine. I'll belch out swollen toads bespotted with
The lard of witches' brew should these be friends.

No friends at all and that we plainly see

When Calvin's goats can thrive. To Phlegeton

With doctrines nurtured in a German cell!

Do they deny our purgatory? Good.

Let them all rot in their created hell.

Our Jesus never bled for Protestants.

Anjou. Kill friends instead who live to our dismay.

Catherine. Will you not thunder, king? Return to me,

My Theseus. Ariadne, robbed of all,

Abandoned on the shore of Naxos, or

Sad Maguelonne, round-bellied without cause,

Did not cry out so vainly to the clouds

As I do here at court.

Charles IX. I'm in a Zacharian muteness till I hear

A blood-crazed child of vengeance born of us.

Anjou. Unless I quite mistake his hasty steps,

The duke of Guise advances to spur on

Death's slower bloody horses of the night.

Enter the duke of Guise

Catherine. The Guise, you have done well and not done well.

Anjou. One day, I'll prick this hairy basilisk.

Guise. Is Maurevert my own? He is, and yet

His hands and eyes are none of mine at all.

Anjou. The Guise equivocates all France to hell.

Catherine. I'm in a tortured frenzy till the foes

Lie at our feet on stranger beds asleep.

Charles IX. O, mother, our gashed country's weal and mine,

What dreaded scheme of treason would you have

A shaken king unwillingly perform?

I swim in a dark pool which I can hope

Is not the blood of wounded angry France.

Guise. The king of Spain frowns darkly at our sloth.

Anjou. Should we hear further from a purchased duke?

The king of Spain is your good master, not

The king of France.

Guise. The king of Spain and the pope understand,

Promote, and help religion as I do.

Catherine. Hear wisely and speak well, my forward son.

Will you have Philip's cannons at our gates?

To stuff Spain's throat of war the Guise feigns to

Be his entirely, but only so

When Huguenots in shadows subtly lurk

To strike at will against all Catholics.

Guise. These conflicts simmer in confusion's oil

Because the king defends the rotted weed

Of Calvinists in the Low-Countries' dikes.

Anjou. Ha, do you hear, the Guise? A single word

Against my brother is the lodestone that

Will draw a dagger's point from Anjou's spite.

Catherine. Peace on all sides who think God's favor is

More precious than their bellies! Protestants

This night must die before they ever rise.

Charles IX. Ha?

Catherine. In wetted bedsheets smother till he breathes

His last Coligny, lest what Christians won

At jubilant Lepanto to our cause Be lost forever.

Guise. The mighty king of Spain expects our king

To barter his false face for a true mask.

The Protestants in Paris armed and hot

In August: what worse prospect can be seen?

Catherine. Hear: fifty leaders of their faction's worst

Will sleep in their imagined hell tonight.

Anjou. What, slaughters general? France killing France?

Catherine. The Guise will lead our troops. See him display

The cross of innocence against Christ's foes.

Guise. I will not bathe except in Calvin's gore.

Charles IX. This must be scanned in council.

Catherine. The council at this moment hears our case

And will no doubt debate their quiet deaths.

The duke of Nevers captures eyes and ears.

Anjou. Too sudden, mother! O, too violent

And hasty-arbitrary to be well!

Catherine. Our deaths are dreamt about by children.

Guise. Tomorrow false Navarre, as spies reveal,

Will no doubt dampen swords in timid blood,

Unless we play as Christ's own
soldiers armed.

Anjou. Conjectural, as our own
musket-fire!

Catherine. Stay, son.

Charles IX. Do not abandon now a
king besieged

By scattered arrows of
uncertainty.

Guise. Unless you do and do and
do again,

Low-arsed adventurers will peep
inside

Your Louvre at night to massacre
us all.

Exit the Guise

Catherine. I hear Gonzaga's steps
astir with news.

Charles IX. O, misery unknown,
unthought about,

Atop in huddles with more
miseries!

Enter Ludovico Gonzaga

Catherine. Speak, duke of Nevers,
is the council warm?

Does war prevail, or death to our
religion?

Gonzaga. The council of the king
decides for life

With murder of the fifty leaders
you

Disclosed to us as traitors to the
state.

Catherine. I have borne sons,
among whom is a king,

But never yet my heart leapt up as
now,

A moment's grace. I thank the
count of Retz-

Gonzaga. Armand de Clermont
and Teligny rose

And threatened, Jean de
Morvillier was heard

To weep for those who slap his
cheeks and neck-

Catherine. To cut to pieces all the
heretics!

France, henceforth pray to me, a
holier Joan,

Defending patriots and the only
church.

Anjou. To strike preventively is
safest still.

Catherine. Must a fond mother's
robes sweep on the filth

Of palace floors with pleadings?
Are you mine?

Charles IX. King Francis was by
Spanish enemies

Clapped up in shame, I, by my
family:

Who are more dangerous to a
king's rest?

To kill them is a lively death to
me,

Not to kill them a kind of deadly
life.

Then kill them all. Let not one
man be left

To blame me for this crime, a
loathed one,

Well cogitated to please
handsomely

Mere strangers: a pope and a king
of Spain.

Catherine. My own and king!
Charles IX. The white cross bleeds
 already in my heart
 And belly's core.

Exeunt Charles IX, Catherine de
 Medici, Anjou, and Gonzaga

Act 2. Scene 1. A street in Paris.
 1572

Enter Turpin and a woman,
 fondling each other

Turpin. Some stolen beauty in
 these turpitudes!

Enter Crudmore and exit the
 woman

Should I quit fornication's hidden
 nest?

Crudmore. No, do it all the time,
 do it before

My face. Be carnal-minded and
 then live.

Go. Mortify at once timidity,
 Kill coyness in her bud, dive like
 the bee

In open blossoms, stick there till
 you drop

In heavy sweetness. Be my son
 again.

Turpin. I'm strangely tempted by
 your ordinance.

Crudmore. To live alone is death;
 new pillowmates

Obtain if you cannot detain them
 long.

Let no one chide and rail before
 your face:

"You frigger much too rarely,
 Turpin." No,

Do it in every garden, every room,
 Do it in muck, do it in sun or rain,
 Explore the pit some feign they
 cannot taste

With man's strong juices and with
 strenuous strokes.

Do it until you blister.

Turpin. I'll be a woman's fool if I
 submit.

Crudmore. Ah, better far to
 whimper as her fool

Than with a bell and cap to
 entertain

A king in your own follies and
 despair.

Firk her and fuck her, too. Firk
 him as well.

The foul and soiled ones are
 despised by worse:

Do it likewise with them, more
 often, for

Most dally trifling even better
 still.

Turpin. I should be taking notes.

Crudmore. Go. Glory in the flesh.
 What else have you?

Be rich in red drops, heavier with
 thick hair

On hairless bosom. Let her Tethys-
 like

Spread silver beads of sweat on
 brow and breast,

Permit her to lie over you, thick
 mount

In forestry of unexplored desire.

Be hers, let her be yours, become
her cunt,

Let her possess a phallus, crucify
Each body's needs with every
pleasure known.

While soldiers daily hear a woman
weep,

I hear mine laugh in tears and
willingly.

Turpin. Ha! Do you always follow
these conceits?

Crudmore. My calling is to foutre
twice a day,

Three times before mass. Hear: I
go to church

To moon or doze, I go to bed to
work.

Confound a priest: do it behind
church-doors,

On straw-piles and on grass, do it
with him

As well, should he rise as
temptation's son.

Turpin. I am too timid for this
gear, I think.

Crudmore. Be daring: fornicate
with anyone

You can. A little more than ten is
good.

Be sexed like pastures of
prevented goats.

Proliferate like moss: who will
judge you?

The saints?

Should you not rather judge the
saints instead?

Turpin. I feel much bolder now.

Crudmore. Good fornication is the
body's house

Of glory. In the Paphian temple lie,

A phallic Jesus smiling at our
deeds,

Between two thighs, the only
happy place,

No other heaven for us but for
that,

No happier hour can here be
spent at all:

Three gates of Venus open half
the night,

Which all the women and most
men adore,

Except perverted blots, shame of
our kind,

Priests with their juiceless tribes.
Do as they do,

Be faithful to your pleasures, high
or low,

And not another's, if you love
yourself.

Turpin. Yet preachers swear lust
finds his punishment

In his own wind.

Crudmore. Serve Venus in her
works, or warp condemned,

A slave to other people's appetite.
How can a man or woman

copulate
Most of the time and live

unhappily?

If you are fortunate in languid
loves,

You may with luck be happy in all
things.

Do we own organs just for show,
or use?

Is it not wiser to fall lowly on

Our knees inside fanes of idolatry

Where our reward is known to any
fool?

Turpin. It is.

Crudmore. To watch a woman
languishing in vain
Is hell's and purgatory's course of
pain.

Let her light fan blow your
uncertain lust

Afire with longing.

Turpin. These are new sermons.

Crudmore. Be dissolute, no matter
what priests say.

Men frown in hearing once what
most, had they

The means, would do a thousand
times each day.

Turpin. I will forget my curate.

Crudmore. No eye remembers
passing friends who leave.

Turpin. I'll get a woman now.

Crudmore. I plant, she waters, and
the flower's joy,

In awe of your own body and of
hers

Or his, not of the spirit, nothing
worth

Except philosophers'. But this is
yours,

This yours, that yours as well, and
all is yours

That can be felt on you and you
on her.

The rest is gewgaw.

Exeunt Crudmore and Turpin

Act 2. Scene 2. A street in Paris.

1572

Enter two Catholic soldiers while
the bell of Saint Germain
l'Auxerrois rings

1 Soldier. Before the morning
light bleeds on the panes
Of house and church, some
Protestants will know

Whether our purgatory is to be
Their prison or our fable.
Otherwise,

Pack them like onions straight in
rows to hell.

2 Soldier. We bait and stab.

1 Soldier. We rail and foin.

2 Soldier. We force them to their
knees, in blood abashed,
To pay due homage to our virgin
swords

If not to our transcendent virgin's
foot.

1 Soldier. Eschew all forms of
dalliance till the knaves
Rot on forgotten grounds.

2 Soldier. I will forget the body of
a girl

In these assaults and aim at man
alone.

1 Soldier. From highest turrets
fling the caitiffs down.

2 Soldier. Bartholomew day is a
feast of joy.

Enter a Huguenot citizen

Huguenot. What bell is that?

1 Soldier. No white cross on his
hat.

2 Soldier. No red one on his
breast.

1 Soldier. Indulgence is a stranger quite unknown
And tolerance a fabler to be mocked.

Huguenot. Indulgences we laugh at, honored sirs,
With medals, pictures, statues of old saints,
Who need no trash in heaven as they sing.

2 Soldier. Thrust him for that jest.

Huguenot. Am I in danger? Ha? Ha? Will you hurt
A man unarmed, one whom you do not know?

1 Soldier. Yes.

2 Soldier. Bind him.

Huguenot. Will you, because I cannot kneel and pray
To your Jerome and lion, do me harm?

1 Soldier. On this Bartholomew day, we enjoy
To watch foes bleeding on the stony ground
While puffing out their shortest, latest breath.

2 Soldier. Less talking and more stabbing.

Huguenot. Ha! Ha! Despair and death!

Enter Crudmore

2 Soldier. One of our own.

Crudmore. Who is the prisoner?

2 Soldier. A man condemning his own life away.

Crudmore. A Protestant?

1 Soldier. He boasts of it.

Crudmore. Here, take my crutch; beat him to death with it.

2 Soldier. No, daggers are quite sharper.

Crudmore. Give me no coins today: melt them instead,
Together with all metals you can find,

For rapiers, larger swords, and cutlasses,

To wound to death protesting Protestants.

1 Soldier. A beggar famous for his charity!

2 Soldier. True ignorance can offer sound advice.

Huguenot. A sober-minded man, intent to gain
In my despair his heaven with our hell.

2 Soldier. (stabbing him to death) There in a stream of blood-drops as we speak.

1 Soldier. Will you earn money, Crudmore? Throw him down
Into the thickened Seine, white mud with black.

Exit Crudmore, bearing the Huguenot citizen

2 Soldier. Municipal authorities have shut
The city gates to keep the Huguenots

Inside, while thousands of their soldiery

Outside our barriers blink and worry still.

1 Soldier. More prizes for this day
all Catholic!

Enter above in Coligny's
bedchamber the servants of the
Guise

1 Servant. The admiral is sleeping.
2 Servant. Not deep enough for
me.

Enter below the duke of Guise

Guise. Come, is it done?

1 Servant. Not yet.

2 Servant. We lose time talking.

1 Servant. Do it. I'm still a virgin
in this work.

2 Servant. (stabbing Coligny)
I can prick well a man in bed.

1 Servant. This I will do.

(Coligny is thrown down; the
Guise kicks him

Guise. Our country's murderer
will always be
Alive to my despite. Take him
away.

I will slice off his head at leisure
and

Send the red trophy to Pope
Gregory.

As for the trunk, street-urchins
begging in

The shadows of Saint Germain
l'Auxerrois

Can surely invent worse outrages
Than soldiers of Picardie ever can.

Exeunt the Guise, servants, and
soldiers, bearing Coligny

Act 2. Scene 3. A street in Paris.
1572

Enter Pépin and Marie

Pépin. Coligny assassinated in his
bed on Béthisy street! My friend,
Pierre de la Ramée, syllogism's
son, gone to visit Aristotle!

Marie. Coligny's lieutenants
spiked to death at the Louvre!

Pépin. Our soldiers locked out!

Marie. And we locked in!

Pépin. How can I escape?

Marie. Men with a white band on
their left arm stripped Polisson's
body of his best clothes.

Pépin. And farther down the street
the Laviterne house with
mutilated, men, women, and
infants swimming with closed eyes
in a new Seine!

Marie. Thanks to our dearest
Catholic neighbor, Froissy, who
hid us both in his cellar, we
escape for a time their justice.
Working humanity!

Pépin. I owe him money.

Marie. A leper's money will be
fondled on

And kissed. Ha! Ha! Who comes?

Pépin. We'll hide in mud like
swallows.

Exeunt Pépin and Marie, enter the
duke of Guise and servants
chasing a Huguenot citizen

Guise. Death to our God should he escape unhurt!

1 Servant. We hold him.

2 Servant. Dang him to purgatory at long last.

Guise. Crush out his head-piece like the rotted pear
Of his religion.

1 Servant. (crushing him)
Done.

Guise. Till now, I never hated Luther's fools

Since first I held and sucked Megaera's breast.

To Saint-Germain-des-Prés with wings of love,

That small Geneva of lost heretics,
For greater slaughters and new hope in France!

Exeunt the Guise and soldiers,
bearing the Huguenot citizen

Act 2. Scene 4. The Louvre in
Paris. 1572

Enter the king of Navarre and the prince of Condé

Navarre. Like children sent to rooms for punishment.

Condé. With red heads not red arses.

Navarre. I saw the king shoot at his subjects from
His balcony.

Condé. He comes, and with a violent anguished look.

Navarre. Dissimulate. I am Navarre no more
And you no shirtless prince of Condé. Stare,
Blink, slaver, speak as they expect or wish.

Enter King Charles IX, attended

Charles IX. Today we spare all princes of the blood.

Condé. Why should you, sir? Most of our friends are dead.

Charles IX. Provided you convert.

Navarre. Some oil on our pale foreheads or else blood!

Condé. A cruel choice!

Charles IX. Do you accept?

Navarre. A king's word on it.

Condé. A prince's, too.

Enter Catherine de Medici

Catherine. Do they agree?

Charles IX. They do.

Catherine. Then welcome bleeding to God's grace and ours.

Charles IX. Attend the king and prince.

Exeunt Navarre and Condé,
guarded

Catherine. Navarre and Condé left alive for us

Serve as a counterweight to help pull down

The heaven-pointing engines of the Guise.

Charles IX. I heard the populace
yell out: "The Guise
And our religion!" None spoke
well of me.

Catherine. Navarre and Condé in
our house of peace!

Charles IX. And yet thoughts burn
in me, a visionless
White fire, not understood, with
devils born

Each minute in my belly torturing.
We hold the door to terrors and
afflictions.

Catherine. Our way is lurid with
great sorrows till
We sleep in the right place and
nakedly.

(The bell of of Saint Germain
l'Auxerrois stops ringing

A silence in sleeps of
forgetfulness!

To our affairs.- Do you attend?
Not here?

My Henry fondles secretly Marie,
The prince of Condé's wife. A
mother can
Win him away from that
distracting spell.

Exeunt Charles IX and Catherine de
Medici

Act 2. Scene 5. A street in Paris.
1572

Enter Pépin and Marie

Pépin. The Seine is sick with
corpses.

Marie. We will be quite unable for
a while

To swallow any fish or weed from
it.

Pépin. Friends move without
moving towards Chaillot and
Auteil.

Marie. In a broth of bones and
macerated flesh.

Pépin. You have attended but
distractedly a scholar's
explanations, excellent in scarcity
of elocutionary digressions, on
the most likely reasons underlying
our disasters.

Marie. True, the only conflict
women care about is the war
against wrinkles.

Pépin. Is that not Crudmore and a
Catholic?

Enter Crudmore and Turpin

Crudmore. Not Crudmore and a
Catholic except
To ardent well-armed Catholics I
know.

Pépin. You have converted, I hear,
so many times from one to the
other that you can no longer
know who you are.

Turpin. My father, I think.

Crudmore. And father of my son, I
hope.

Marie. You are remorseless
tyrants to your wife
And mother if you ever doubt her
faith.

Crudmore. She has abandoned me to my own self,
Once a good scholar, now a begging slave.

Pépin. No better prospects?

Crudmore. I deserve no better house than none at all, for I'm tireless in shunning work.

Turpin. So am I, since first we rowed and swam away from England's tide of persecution against honest vagrancy.

Marie. Are you lame, too?

Crudmore. No more than I or you. He only likes

To imitate his father. It can draw
Some tears and pieces from the tender ones.

Turpin. I am rewarded with the first by love

And with the second by more belly-food.

Pépin. I can get both from mine.

Turpin. I should take her away from you, then, sir.

Marie. I would not follow you for heaven's prize.

Turpin. That's my bed.

Pépin. More soldiers!

Exeunt Pépin and Marie and enter two Catholic soldiers

1 Soldier. More often than I pissed.

2 Soldier. Your tale makes mine all the more stiffer still.

1 Soldier. Stay, vagrant cur, are you a Catholic?

Crudmore. Well proven to a holier man than you.

2 Soldier. He means the pope, I guess.

1 Soldier. And you?

Turpin. His son.

2 Soldier. Go.

Crudmore. We thank you, sirs.

Exeunt the Catholic soldiers

Turpin. No luck today.

Crudmore. Some disembowelled Huguenot houses may yet flow with eatables.

Exeunt Crudmore and Turpin

Act 2. Scene 6. The Louvre in Paris. 1572

Enter King Charles IX and the duke of Guise

Charles IX. An end to massacres!
Duke, by our throne

And scepter never in our life forsworn,

Let fresher gallows rise on Paris streets

To dissuade the killers. - Nevers!-
Where

Is Nevers? Send that duke and Angoulême

To promulgate on every parish wall

That rioters will hang, a kingly oath

With a sincere and truest verity

Declared, to be most strictly followed here.

Guise. The pope, well pleased, engraves to Europe's joy Commemorative medals of our deeds:

Avenging angels striking down with swords

The heinous enemies of God and France.

Charles IX. They say four thousand of our citizens

Swell in the streets and fields for kites, or move

With lifeless life in the undrinkable

Seine, while King Philip, almost never seen

To smile or wink, with pleasure loudly laughs.

Guise. Your guard protected ably Walsingham.

Charles IX. What of the infidel at Montargis?

Guise. Renée of France is saved.

Charles IX. I meant to kill some traitors- was that not

What the queen-mother said? or do I dream?-

Yes, traitors, not a single Protestant.

Guise. You see how bitterly the common rout

In Paris hate to death all Huguenots.

Charles IX. You killed Coligny?

Guise. And Landry, the great bowler, in an hour,

Who lost his life and all his bowling-pins.

Charles IX. A pleasant savor to a dead rat's tooth.

Enter Catherine de Medici

O, mother, far more than your fifty slain!

Exit Charles IX

Catherine. Thanks to the king, some Huguenots still live.

Guise. His clemency is cruel.

Catherine. A brace of Luther's stooges hide at Mons,

About eight-hundred freezing in pale fear,

To be surprised as soon as they reach France

By the resourceful duke of Longueville.

Guise. He will not fail unless he loses breath.

Catherine. Breathe life into religion's panting corpse.

Guise. Resistance still in La Rochelle, Sancerre,

And Sommières must at all costs be cut off

And brought down branchless in our zealous fire.

The Protestant with self-love marries, breeds

Cool confidence, who, with unshriven feet,

Stroll casually to an eternal fire.

Where should invented prayers lead except

To pack hell with more souls? Inspired heads,

Who need no priest to pardon,
gargle texts
From springs of their own making,
promulgate

As if Paul whispers nightly in their
ears

Interpretations, as if angels sing
With such a voice of power in
their house

That one could swear they eat
their bread with Christ.

Catherine. What from such
doctrines is expected but

At the last trumpet to see bodies
ripped

With shrieks from their grave-
clothes, led off like slaves

Towards the lonely house of
deathless death?

Onward with mercy for all souls in
France!

Exeunt Catherine de Medici and
the Guise

Act 2. Scene 7. Before the gates of
La Rochelle. 1572

Enter the duke of Anjou, Ludovico
Gonzaga, the king of Navarre, and
the prince of Condé, attended

Anjou. Do these confederates with
scorn refuse

Armand of Gontaut as their
governor?

Then raise a siege till every citizen
Of La Rochelle is shot or stabbed
to death.

Gonzaga. Rebellion will be
pinched in winter time.

Anjou. The duke of Aumale swears
he will have blood

Or La Rochelle most loyal to the
king.

Gonzaga. His promises are well-
aimed musket-balls.

Anjou. How many hardy soldiers
stand with us?

Gonzaga. Twenty-eight thousand.

Anjou. How many soldiers crouch
in fear with them?

Gonzaga. One thousand soldiers
with two thousand more

Inured for fighting.

Anjou. My brother, Francis
Alençon, intends

This stormy day to be their last or
his.

Gonzaga. His cannons roar against
their fainting ears.

Anjou. Then, La Rochelle, beg for
our clemency.

Gonzaga. The duke of Guise to
reinforce our troops!

Enter the duke of Guise and
Charles of Lorraine

Guise. Why is not La Rochelle a
hole of blood?

Anjou. The Guise, we have not yet
begun to try

Our mighty forces in this heady
fight.

Gonzaga. What of the other cities
in revolt?

Guise. My brother knows and
loves the latest news.

Charles. In anguish Sommières
sweats to be besieged
By troops of Montmorency. Say
what we

Must do until the wives of La
Rochelle

Gnaw grievingly their finger-nails
and arms

On dust-heaps for lost husbands,
fathers, sons.

Anjou. Wait for the duke of
Aumale's coming with

His potent force at dawn.

Guise. Can they be starved?

Gonzaga. My spies reveal some of
their men begin

To chew on their house-rats.

Anjou. Bring to my tent Jean-Louis
de La Valette,

A gentleman I wish to know more
of.

Two men with me to welcome
Aumale well!

Exit Anjou, attended

Guise. Do you not waver at these
strong assaults?

Navarre. No, duke. We are
remorseless Catholics.

Condé. And what we were before
we never knew.

Guise. Well.

Exeunt the Guise and Charles

Gonzaga. Come, will you follow
Mars' only son?

Navarre. We must.

Condé. We will and must because
our will is such.

Exeunt Gonzaga, Navarre, and
Condé

Act 4. Scene 1. The king's castle at
Plessis-les-Tours. 1577

Enter Jean-Louis de La Valette and
Anne de Joyeuse

Valette. Damville, to please his
wife, is now declared

A traitor to religion and the state.

Joyeuse. He's ours and welcome.

Valette. What is prepared today
for our delight?

Joyeuse. A royal feast with meat
of every kind,

Known and unknown, with
artichoke and corn,

With carrot, cauliflower, squash,
and bean,

With onion, lettuce, watercress,
and leek.

Valette. No coriander?

Joyeuse. With coriander, too,
besprinkled well

With ginger, cinnamon, and
parsley.

Valette. And to our view?

Joyeuse. A masque of spring-
leaved women dressed as men

In color of rapt fools. They will
perform

Forbiddenly in dark Sicilian dales,
Where you will wish yourself
transformed into

A mouse to see what men postiche
can do.

Valette. The king in pink and
silver suit enjoys
Such goodly not ungodly joys.

Enter King Henry III

Henry III. I have conceived a ploy,
where Anjou's faith
Will be much darkened in the
people's hearts
Forever, if I live.

Valette. Ah, what?

Henry III. No, later, Jean-Louis.
There seems to be
Some jolly banqueting in
readiness.

Joyeuse. I have devised for my
renowned king
A fitly entertainment that should
please.

Here is a poet to prepare our ears
For what our eyes may readily
swoon in.

Enter Pépin

Pépin. Now welcome, gentle
feasters all.
In titillating candlelight,
We will italianize the French,
Feast palates, eyes, and ears,
Out of her hellish crevices
Receive a new Persephone
In floral pageants never seen,
Where you will wish yourself
An actor in the fairy scene,
Both man and woman in a trice,

To know the pleasures of each
sex,

Where everyone declares: "Love is
no sin."

Henry III. Call for my mother and
my queen in white.

Joyeuse. Ah, highest majesty, can
this be wise?

Henry III. Call them, I say. My
mother likes a masque
Or four, though rarely quite so
bold and true.

Exit Joyeuse

Valette. I stiffen as I sit in hope of
love.

Henry III. Already too susceptible,
Jean-Louis,
To spill yourself before the rightful
time.

Re-enter Joyeuse with Catherine
de Medici

Good mother, sit, to hear some
country fare.

Catherine. A pastoral?

Henry III. You'll think yourself
astride shy Daphne's lap.
Where is my modest queen?

Joyeuse. No doubt at prayers still,
my goodly liege.

Henry III. The better, then,
perhaps.

Enter Persephone, followed by her
suitors

Pépin. Persephone is followed by

A round of suitors very bold.

(They whisper to her and make signs of their intentions

All hope to fertilize their love
In bosky regions moist and hot.

(A suitor takes her by the hand
and covers her

An instrument her choice presents
To please a girl as she expects.

(A second suitor provides a dildo

No Dido is this helpful boy,
Though burning in an obvious
fire,
But a good dildo he provides,
Such that boy-women should
apply
To majesties alive at front and
back.

Catherine. Courtly extravagance!

Exit Catherine de Medici

(The suitors enter the bushes with
Persephone

Thus ends the better to begin our
masque.

Exit Pépin

Henry III. I am invited to rehearse
in there.

Joyeuse. In Saint Priapus' temple I
should kneel.

Valette. And I officiating as the
priest,

With Aretino as my prayer-book,
A bedpost as my pulpit and my
charge

With bread and wine invited to be
free

And charitable to all men of faith.

Exeunt Henry III, de La Valette,
and Joyeuse

Act 4. Scene 2. The king's castle at
Navarre. 1578

Enter the king of Navarre and the
prince of Condé

Navarre. In southern parts, our
troops continue to
Attack their castles, sack their
churches, rob

Their merchants, rape their nuns,
and massacre

Defenseless citizens and farmer's
sons

Wherever they are found.

Condé. A stew of mayhem
poisoning our lips

As soon as we sip it. Who should
now choose

Our side when reading these
atrocities?

Navarre. There is no honest treaty
possible

With Catholics, whose Jesus is
their hate.

Condé. None with the debonnaire
girl-king at least,
In rosy vapors dancing with his
sweets,

Wan ministers of his
voluptuousness.

Navarre. A fouted king cannot be
bold with men.

Condé. Then let us raise far
pricklier implements

Than those King Henry's fork is
rubbed against:

No ranks of poles but battle-axe
and pike.

Exeunt Navarre and Condé

Act 4. Scene 3. The Louvre in
Paris. 1578

Enter King Henry III and Catherine
de Medici

Catherine. No love remaining in a
brother's eye?

Henry III. Does not the colored
beetle hungrily

Bore in the kernel of his king and
France?

Catherine. Fit brothers are
discovered in the ranks
Of favorites of kings!

Henry III. Francis of Espinay, lord
of Saint Luke-

Catherine. Francis of Espinay, lord
of Saint Luke,
Should be rid of.

Henry III. How! He has done some
signal services

To France no courtier can attempt
as yet.

Catherine. Kings have loved
minions and these minions have
Been often prized above his
treasury,

But never yet a wasp invaded
hives

To rule in them as if he were a
king.

Henry III. A mother always wishes
to be rid

Of any love or friend except
herself.

Catherine. Henry of Saint-Sulpice,
base badger, fed
On courtly honey.

Henry III. Yet Jacques de Caylus'
cousin bled with me

At La Rochelle and in a quarrel
was

Found stung to death for me two
years ago.

Catherine. Arch-minions I can
hate.

Henry III. All will prove true to
France and to her king.

Enter Anne de Joyeuse

Joyeuse. My liege, there is a duel
ended that

Will mar our joys awhile.

Catherine. Ha, minions in a duel!

Henry III. Who dares to fight
against express commands
Of his own king?

Joyeuse. My liege-lord, Jacques de
Caylus-

Henry III. Is Jacques de Caylus challenged?

Joyeuse. No, Jacques de Caylus is already hit.

Henry III. By whom?

Joyeuse. Three knights defending your high royalty

Have fought against three knights defending I

Do not know why your brother.

Henry III. No!

Catherine. I dreamt it would be so.

Henry III. Who fought for me?

Catherine. O! What intrigues are these, Joyeux? Vile grubs

Intent on spoiling loving brothers' meats?

Joyeuse. Among your majesty's defendants in

This mighty duel Maugiron in arms.

Henry III. What happened to my friendly Maugiron?

Joyeuse. Louis de Maugiron is dead.

Henry III. Ah, no! And Caylus?

Enter servants carrying Caylus' corpse

Joyeuse. Dead after thirty hours in agony.

Henry III. Ah, no! He bears more wounds than I have ears

To be obeyed. And loyal Livarot?

Joyeuse. Hurt but still living.

Henry III. Two dead for me, and I have nothing gained

From the exchange but wringing of grieved hands.

Joyeuse. On Anjou's side, dead are rash Schomberg and Hot Ribérac, but Entraguet will live.

Enter Jean-Louis de La Valette

Valette. The duke of Anjou has departed from

Our amiable court.

Catherine. No!

Henry III. Again?

Catherine. My son! See what a king's contempt achieves.

Valette. With Bussy, Simier, Cangé-

Joyeuse. No blood of worth in any of these three

To feed a dying horse-fly!

Henry III. Where?

Valette. To Angers.

Henry III. Where he will plot.

Valette. Then on to the Low-Countries, it is said.

Henry III. Where the chief cockerel will in good time

Stand on his perch to spy for fox or wolf

Inside his territory and then cluck His hens towards some grains to hatch revolts.

Exeunt Henry III, Catherine de Medici, de la Valette, and Joyeuse, with servants bearing Caylus' corpse

Act 4. Scene 4. A street in Paris.

1579

Enter Marie and Crudmore

Marie. Stabbed in his cellar,
Crudmore.

Crudmore. Forever dead! Unholy
is the hand

That strikes for holiness. More
violent deaths

For Jewish fables!

Marie. He brought me important
money at the end from the king's
banquets and other twirlihoos.

Crudmore. Well thought on!

Marie. He pleased me with a deal
of conversation, too. Where is he
now? I can very well see him
conversing with Paul and
Augustine about matters of deep
doctrine. He might have eaten
honeyless locusts with the Baptist,
slept with his bobbing Savior in
the tempest, or gorged till
vomiting on miraculous fish and
bread.

Crudmore. Doubtless, if offered
the chance.

Marie. How he would have
enjoyed to be at Cana's feast, with
all that wine flowing! On a lazy
Sunday forenoon, I often saw him
smack his lips at the mere thought
of it, reaching for yet another can
or bottle.

Crudmore. I joined him happily in
those celebrations.

Marie. I remember how angry he
became on hearing Herod's story,
how he thundered, and how gladly
he would have pulled at that
tyrant's beard with no need to

hope for in return, provided no
armed retainer of his stood by.
And Judas! O, how Pépin's fists
shook in anger at the only traitor.
O, how he punched, kicked, and
generally pummeled the picture of
that awful dissenter! "Give me a
poniard," he would command,
and, hacking at our old barn-
house door which burnt in last
year's fire, he seemed to destroy
Judas' face on it, pierced with so
many holes that one could very
well pity that door. He used a flail,
too.

Crudmore. Commendable piety!

Marie. On the first Easter
morning, we understand that
though Jesus had predicted that in
three days he would rise in glory,
no apostle stood before his grave-
perhaps because they had a more
important meeting elsewhere. In
any case, my Pépin often declared:
"I would have stood there and
waited, Marie. I would have asked
you that very morning to prepare
for me a heavy basket of pullets
and bread, intending to breathe in
my Savior's temporary home all
day long and all the rest of the
week if need be." Had he been
Catholicly given, my husband
would have much enjoyed to be
received in the king's Order of the
Holy Spirit for their silver-doved
collars, often repeating to all his
friends that the Holy Spirit was his
favorite ghost.

Crudmore. He was also carnally given, I hear.

Marie. Extremely so, quite adept to know

That pleasure costing less than money to

Yield and worth more than money to receive.

Crudmore. Revered for poetry, too.

Marie. Some said his poems, taken at first flush,

Could outdo Homer's in brave martial feats,

Sad Virgil's in lone shepherd's fruitless loves,

Though true it is those who opined that way

Were friends of his, some drunk, or even mad.

Crudmore. I saw him quite affected by a play

Once in the palace-house of Burgundy

At the recondite death of Portia's nurse.

Marie. The author was his friend; that was his way

Of being courteous. In most instances,

He chortled at the most pathetic parts,

Was often asked to leave the theater

Even by vulgar fools. He only wept During Good Friday, as if chewed on by

The fish he was consuming.

Exit Marie and enter Turpin

Turpin. More luck today.

Crudmore. You received alms at the Bordeleau farm?

Turpin. No charity, and yet this neighbor I

Can like today and afterwards all week.

Crudmore. Why?

Turpin. These eggs were his this morning.

Crudmore. You stole his eggs?

Turpin. I did.

Crudmore. Bad, son. You should not take away your neighbor's eggs.

Turpin. Why not?

Crudmore. What if he stole yours?

Turpin. He would never do it, having so many of his own.

Crudmore. Who is the woman I found sleeping on your bed?

Turpin. His wife.

Crudmore. You stole his wife away?

Turpin. No, she walked to my bed by herself.

Crudmore. Bad, son, very bad. You should not take away a man's wife.

Turpin. Why not?

Crudmore. What if he seduced yours?

Turpin. After I'm done, he can have her back.

Crudmore. They'll call you evil-nurtured and I shamed, In dust-heaps grieving, as some fathers do

A hundred times at least each day
they live.

Turpin. No matter as for that.

Crudmore. Can you not keep her?

Turpin. No. Women are a loose
yoke.

Exeunt Crudmore and Turpin

Act 4. Scene 5. A field of war
outside La Fère. 1580

Enter the prince of Condé and
Huguenot soldiers

Condé. The soldiers in La Fère
deny the rights

Of my authority? Good, for this
show,

I may with one blast kill
religiously

All my opponents on a single day.

1 Soldier. Some may be hiding in
these darkened shrubs.

2 Soldier. No matter. We are stiff
for anything

A pack of anguished coward hinds
may lift

With which to threaten in their
senseless fear.

Condé. Picardie's widows will
forever mourn

Man's needless obdurateness.

Enter Catholic soldiers

They charge.

2 Soldier. Down towards their
imagined purgatory.

Condé. Then cross them, not with
holy water but

With their own blood.- Come,
folly's images,

Graves hunger for your bones.

(They fight

Exeunt retreating Condé and
Huguenot soldiers, enter Jean-
Louis de La Valette and Anne de
Joyeuse

Valette. Here's joy of fighting and
some winning prize

I understand.

Joyeuse. Where is the prince? I
think I should be heel

To toe against a rebel slave and
win.

Valette. Inside this house, I think,
for certain locked.

Joyeuse. Then hack all doors with
battle-ax and knife,

With elbows and with fingers if
they fail.

Re-enter Condé with more
Huguenot soldiers

Valette. A trick to spoil us!

Joyeuse. My teeth against his own
and one of us

To die most valiantly!

(They fight. Condé strikes Joyeuse
down and Huguenots soldiers strike
down Valette

Enter more Catholic soldiers

2 *Soldier*. Ha, ha, escape, my lord,
or die today.

Condé. Retreat! Retreat! We may
not stand and live.

Exeunt Condé and Huguenot
soldiers

1 *Catholic Soldier*. Both dead?

2 *Catholic Soldier*. Neither, but
the viscount of Joyeuse lost some
teeth and part of his jaw.

Exeunt Catholic soldiers bearing
de La Valette and Joyeuse

Act 4. Scene 6. The Louvre in
Paris. 1582

Enter King Henry III and Ludovico
Gonzaga

Henry III. For his unquestioned
valor, my good friend,
Jean-Louis de La Valette of
Languedoc,
Created on this day the duke of
Epernon!

Gonzaga. O, well deserved! He
almost killed outright

In combats close with renegades
perplexed

The prince of Condé.

Henry III. Thanks to those sharp
encounters, Condé flies

To Germany, where may he ever
hide

By faith alone, afraid of our stout
arms

In Luther's faithless churches.

Gonzaga. The duke of Joyeuse, we
are pleased to learn

From his physicians, out of danger
stands

At last, although with seven fewer
teeth

And badly knit jaw-bones,
preventing speech.

Henry III. The duke of Joyeuse is
at once declared

Lord admiral of France.

Exit Gonzaga and enter Jean-Louis
de La Valette

Henry III. No lingering limp?

Valette. What if I had? With one
leg I would ride

The vessel of our country's
purposes

And jettison superfluous
shipmates.

May I discover on a surgeon's
knife

No pity till our wars at last are
done.

Henry III. Where is Joyeuse?

Valette. Behind me in position,
never yet

In loyalty towards his lovely king.

Enter Anne de Joyeuse

Henry III. Ha, can you speak,
duke?

Valette. I doubt it, my good liege.

Henry III. Yet try again.

Joyeuse. Hermagh dfgèis davö.

Henry III. I thank you, duke.

Valette. Ha! Did you understand him?

Henry III. I did. Did I not, Joyeuse?

Joyeuse. Rfjjd fhèio vèviwer firi.

Henry III. Let them complain of super-minions: mine

Are precious to the happiness of France.

Exeunt Henry III, de La Valette, and Joyeuse

Act 4. Scene 7. The Louvre in
Paris. 1584

Enter Catherine de Medici and Ludovico Gonzaga

Gonzaga. Since losing Antwerp,
Anjou is a sponge
Seeped heavily with hard-to-be-
dislodged

Despair, worse than a mildew to
help ills

Which filled with dust the mouth
of our last king.

Catherine. Since first I heard
William of Orange choose

The duke of Anjou as the mighty
sovereign

Of the Low-Countries, I have
seldom smiled

In thinking of my plight. A son of
mine,

After the signing at Plessis-les-
Tours,

Approved by all but Holland and
Zeeland,

Protector of a state against the
king

Of Spain! I had for him prepared a
match

With the prevaricating English
queen,

Which must not be believed or
thought of now.

Gonzaga. The king with news from
the duke of Brabant!

Enter King Henry III

Catherine. I do not like your face
today, my son.

Henry III. It will not hide away
from you this night.

Catherine. O, ominous! May terror
press my heart

To stop its needless, hapless
hammering

Before a word too terrible to
know

Hits my pale ears.

Henry III. Grief speaks with a
mouth full of stones.

Catherine. I'm a trapped rabbit
sniffing anxiously

At the dull-yellow muscled back
of a

Serene and ready python.

Henry III. My brother, duke of
Anjou, is no more.

Catherine. O, I am struck.

Henry III. Our rebel brother dead!

Catherine. O, O, the serpent
springs and wraps itself

Three times around my live-dead
body's form,

Where I may live imprisoned in its
folds

For many hours still.

Henry III. Some calmness at these sorrows, mother, for
He died of a disease none could prolong,

And is transformed, some would aver, into

A son of heaven, far more blessed in

That name than any son of yours can be.

Catherine. Ah, ah, ah, ah! I am for shrieking half

The day in bed and all the night beneath

This kindest of all grounds.

Henry III. Griefs rise and face the day. No help from tears

Can be obtained and little from such cries.

Catherine. Ah, let me lose both voice and life at once.

Gonzaga. Believe in God. Acknowledge that this death

Is good for him and thereby to us all.

Henry III. Gonzaga, to her chamber gently lead

My mother, to be watched, examined, drugged

To angel stillness by our best physicians.

Catherine. I know the woeful in their greater dole.

Ah, will Navarre be king? I am a child

With sharp knives playing on her future griefs.

Exeunt Catherine de Medici and Gonzaga and enter Jean-Louis de La Valette

Valette. My liege, this saddest of afflictions-

What can compare to a dear brother's end?

I'm lost in things to say, I ruminate

With moaning pain. Ulysses on his raft,

When Neptune's anger blew on Ino's veil,

Could not be more distraught than I am now

At these unwelcome news.

Henry III. Our Epernon is now our colonel-general,

The martial head of all the infantry.

Valette. A prize I thought beyond my farthest ken!

Henry III. My enemies include the Protestants,

But also Catholics, thanks to the Guise.

You have been witness to my female acts:

Now look and wonder at my milder ones.

I wish to be a king, and all of France

Will feel and know about a king's intent.

Exeunt Henry III and de La Valette

Act 4. Scene 8. A field of war
outside Coutras. 1587

Enter the king of Navarre, the
prince of Condés, and soldiers

Navarre. The king jumps on his
war-horse to attack
Our forces at the German
borderline.

Condé. The Guise to be
commander of his troops!

Navarre. The treaty of Nemours
with that duke's league,
Containing edicts never read or
known

Against reformed religion, which
they name

Abhorrent heresy, enjoining all
Our pastors in a day to leave the
realm,

Makes me worse than I was
towards Rome's fools,
A man complete in dolor and in
hate.

Condé. We'll meet them there.

Navarre. In thankfulness of his
exploits, the king

With terror yields Verdun, Saint
Diziers, Toul,

And Châlons: all of these in a
duke's name.

Condé. Sixtus, head of their
superstitious church,

Declares a bull in scorn of Salic
law,

Negating your pretention to the
crown

Of France forever.

Navarre. King Henry has refused
to promulgate

That silly bull, for which I'll
gratefully

Hug him with my most potent
arms of war.

Condé. Will the intrigues of Spain,
a foreigner,

Dictate to us in an unhallowed
league?

Navarre. No, no, as all of France
will know about

And with wide-ranging terrors feel
amain.

Enter a soldier bearing an
unconscious Anne de Joyeuse

This is or was the duke of
Joyeuse's trunk.

Condé. He lives.

Navarre. But should he, prince?
Some say his massacre

Of at the least eight hundred
Huguenots

In June at Saint Eloi displeased his
king,

For whom he dared to storm with
arms Coutras.

Condé. He dies at the fierce battle
of Coutras.

Exeunt Condé and a soldier
bearing Joyeuse

Navarre. A prisoner of war,
though massacrer

Of ours, should be well treated. In
our chests,

He yields a banquet of ten
hostages:

One hundred thousand écus.- Let them sink.

Re-enter Condé

Condé. Done.

Navarre. The duke of Joyeuse dead! Announce this bit
Of news to our French king and laugh awhile.

Condé. With his loved brother, Claude, of Saint Sauveur
The lord, joined in one common lonely grave.

Exeunt Navarre and Condé

Act 4. Scene 9. A field of war
outside Vimory. 1587

Enter the duke of Guise, Charles of Lorraine, and soldiers

Guise. Is Vimory achieved and sorrowing?

Charles. The Swiss are routed backward to their pits.

Guise. More yielding to my will!
Bid citizens

To open. We will at our leisure take

Her in great joy.

Exit one soldier

The burgrave of Dohna and de la Marck,
The boiling duke of Bouillon, melt in beer

As witnesses of rising fortunes of the Guise.

I will protect the eastern front against

Invasions of the harried German hosts.

Charles. What of the king?

Guise. The king is confident he can prevent

The joining of Swiss-German armies with

Discouraged plowboys prodded by Navarre.

Charles. Elizabeth of England and the king

Of Denmark bellow on their poor investments.

Enter a second soldier

Where are the horseless reiters?

2 Soldier. Retreated to the castle of Auneau.

Guise. There groaning will they sorely beat their hands

And sweat to find an angry duke of Guise.

Does France lack ground for graves? When they behold

Our arms, with hasty fingers Germany

Will rake up shallow pits to hide her fear.

Exeunt the Guise, Charles, and the second soldier

Act 4. Scene 10. A field of war
outside Auneau. 1587

Enter the first and third soldiers
of the Guise's army

1 Soldier. The duke is much
incensed.

3 Soldier. In such conditions far
away at night

Brave soldiers run.

1 Soldier. Too late! He comes.

Enter the duke of Guise and
Charles of Lorraine

Guise. I triumphed at Auneau and
did the king

Choose to negotiate with enemies?

Charles. A true word, brother.

Guise. Ha, cheated of a triumph
by this king!

Charles. The German troops
convinced to go back home

By Henry's payments in Swiss
mercenaries!

Guise. To Paris, where this Henry
will much rue

His treason of a duke. My league
ascends,

Whose purpose is to rear and to
promote

Supremacies of Rome, the only
church,

In all affairs of state, States-
General

To be the head of finance and
taxation.

I have well thought on this. A case
is made

Of Henry as usurper to the crown,

At all costs necessary to let slip

The Salic law in favor of Navarre.

I can be king as a descendant of
Old Charlemagne and then
establish for

All times a Holy Inquisition in
The land of France, to cure
religion's head

With stronger potions than our
pastors can.

Charles. O, O, my brother, you
reach overfar-

Guise. As high as to a crown, first
earth's then heaven's.

Charles. Well.

Exeunt the Guise, Charles, and
soldiers

Act 5. Scene 1. A street in Paris.

1588

Enter Crudmore and Turpin

Crudmore. The people of Paris,
Catholic in their hatred, under the
influence of the Committee of
Sixteen, show dissatisfaction at
the king's failure to defeat the
Calvinists.

Turpin. I can enjoy a popular
uprising.

Crudmore. The Guise arrives to be
acclaimed by us,

And, it is feared, to challenge
mightily

Inside his palace walls a king
reproved:

Confusion's masterpiece when
friends fight friends.

Turpin. Good.

Crudmore. Raise barricades and towers when the powerfulest meet.

Turpin. Better still.

Enter a shoemaker and a tinker

Shoemaker. Leave nothing at the Louvre except a roaring queen-mother. We'll plunder it. Some say good paintings can be found There and some comfortable chairs.

We'll whisk away with joy a few from those

Who have too many.

Tinker. Prosperous houses in Paris and in the suburbs weep through windows and smoke with rage through doors.

Shoemaker. I can look askance at this king and hiss. Hit a king's face and make him moan.

Tinker. In foulest clothes and with a mouth decayed

We'll do it and then laugh outlandishly.

Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

Shoemaker. Burn him with his bedfellows. He goes forbiddingly the fruitless path, in behind-part ways, thoroughly on the barren side.

Turpin. Is this no sweet revolution? The weaver will obtain an ocean of yarn, the shoemaker a realm of shoe-laces, the tinker a wilderness of pans, the rope-maker work for a hundred men!

Crudmore. When men die, more women are available.

Turpin. A barricaded baroness, a kept cony-cunted countess, an undoused duchess!

White arses, ours! Unsnood your hair and all

The rest besides. A man can plant in there.

O, wrap your legs on either side and tap

My arse with either heel for deeper thrusts

And brisker stirring! Open doorless rooms

To man and let him smiling lie with you.

Crudmore. A hanging matter, *Turpin.*

Turpin. Because they lose some wad inside their twat,

Must *Turpin* lose his neck?

Tinker. You know women, sir?

Turpin. Am I of straw, or angel without sex?

I have with women often tussled, sir.

They like to fuss in clean shirts.

Crudmore. Be well aware: the mildest woman's needs

Will leave a brave man gasping on his floor.

Shoemaker. Beauty deceives and laughing mouths are sepulchres.

Did I not see you in my daughter's room

At dawn with a broad hat below your eyes?

Turpin. That twelve-year old no higher than my hip

Who goes to bed with men as
often as

A whore cajoles or sickly
drunkards piss?

Shoemaker. O, basest slave! What
son-in-law is this?

Say, father of this prize I never
sought

To find and to my shame must be
thought of,

Have you once touched church-
door?

Crudmore. When I was drunk and
heaved my meal on it.

Tinker. Hold, sirs, fight kings with
other enemies

Of all the people.- Ha! Look there:
a sight

I love above an eager mother
spread

Across my bed: the duke of Guise
well armed.

Crudmore. Watch this duke rise
like sunlight stained with cloud.

Alecto's deadly nipple has he
pressed

For milk to make our makeshift
king lose half

His shirt in shreds and fragments
of breast-bones

Together with his life.

Enter the duke of Guise, Charles of
Lorraine, and Paris citizens

Paris citizens. The Guise! The
Guise! The scarred one! Marked of
God!

Guise. The Committee of Sixteen
has this morning welcomed me

with joy and thankfulness. Stand
sturdily and with piked ranks
beside religion, brave people of
Paris. Should King Henry fly from
his shaky Louvre, the Committee
of Sixteen will take complete
control of the government.

Shoemaker. The Guise! The Guise!
The Guise as our new king!

Guise. A king? A king? Oh, no, that
cannot be.

Has any seen two rainbows east
and west?

Charles. A king? Oh, no, my
brother cannot aim

So high. Is he the Guise or Icarus?

Guise. Before the pale-faced king,
I will demand

Instead and sooner than he ever
wished

Debates and parleys in States-
General,

To be imposed at Blois, and force
the loon

To love his people and religion's
cause.

Paris citizens. The Guise! The
Guise! The marked one! Stamped
by God!

Charles. Go, take up staves and
swords, neglected hinds.

This day may yet be warm for
some of us.

Shoemaker. We'll make a
monarch blush outside his skin.

Turpin. Should he resist and puke
before our arms,

We'll mash him to a powder small
enough

To load a famished baby
sparrow's back.

Charles. We'll blow the palace
rooftop on his crown.

Crudmore. I hope he signed his
will.

Guise. Prepare yourselves for
slaughters in our streets
And mayhem in our houses. Big
with care

On your behalf, religion will give
birth

To graces martyred France has
never known.

I will convince the barren king, or
die,

To love his people as a monarch
should,

To hug religion as a leader must.

My horse will wade in blood up to
its hough

Until these resolutions are
achieved.

Shoemaker. The Guise! The one
man for religion's sake!

Tinker. The Guise! The Guise! He
will provide the path,

Work for poor starving patience
pining still.

Charles. No doubt.

Exeunt the Guise, Charles, and
Paris citizens

Turpin. Will this revolt be wisely
carried forth?

Crudmore. Walk out the door: a
fool will speak to you.

Exeunt Crudmore and Turpin

Act 5. Scene 2. The Louvre in Paris. 1588

Enter King Henry III and Jean-Louis
de La Valette

Henry III. Let not the Guise arrive
in Paris now.

Valette. He's here.

Henry III. I greatly sweat at these
unwelcome news,
So much against our will. He
comes enforced

And with him come revolt and
turpitudes.

I peep at windows, spying on each
troop

Assembled, as if meaning to make
his

Our palaces, our might, the crown
of France.

I stain my shirts with creeping out
at night

To hear the ruder commoners
make sport

At our delights, in expectation
that

Most sour the Guise will push out
wantonness

And love-acts from the throne.
Well, let them puff

Their cheeks and stare. The duke
of Joyeuse, dead

On my behalf, as head of
Normandy

You may henceforth replace, and
take as well

His post as admiral in all of
France.

Valette. More honors on a grateful subject's head!

Henry III. Prevent the worst. The Paris multitude

In rage and hunger pilfer bakers' shops

And strut towards the Louvre.

Valette. The poorest feed on half-ripe musts of wheat

In fields like sand for dryness.

Spades they use,

Some with the flesh of officers on them.

Henry III. What, do they rise already?

Valette. Their barricades are up.

Henry III. Sleak water-line before the cataract.

Valette. Most carry rocks from lack of bread and clubs

Instead of meat, adorned with noble blood.

Henry III. I dance in quarries. Ha! Where can we leap?

Enter Catherine de Medici

Catherine. The Guise is standing just outside our gate.

Henry III. Swiss guards spar up the door.

Catherine. His sword-thrusts fan them down.

Henry III. French guards stab any stranger entering.

Catherine. French guards fly off to fields or join his side.

Henry III. Behold a fruitless king, of uses lopped.

Catherine. O, thought beyond belief in any dream!

Will Catholic the Guise drop a French crown

On Protestant Navarre's ungracious head?

Henry III. No, rather on his own.

Catherine. How!

Henry III. "King Charlemagne's descendant authored him,"

Would-be usurpers say, who speak all good

Of him, all ill to barren France and us.

Catherine. O, slave! Will he deny the Salic law?

Henry III. The treble string is broken and we play

Disordered tunes of woe.

Enter Ludovico Gonzaga

A boon! The prince of Condé is deceased.

Greet cheerfully Picardie's governor.

Gonzaga. O, fly, my liege.

Henry III. Ha?

Gonzaga. The Guise with multitudes of breakers shakes

Our stoutest fortified door with wave on wave

That levels all.

Henry III. My mettle rusts with this corrosive.

Catherine. Fools sleep in tempests.

Henry III. To Blois!

Valette. In blasts of violent whirlwinds caught in fire!

Exit de La Valette

Henry III. Will majesty hit his knees in despair,
Keen in the kitchen with his scullions? No.

An ungraved carcass will kiss with sweet breath
Before a king consents to his demands.

Catherine. A king and a queen-mother must like rats
Escape at night through secret water-ways.

Henry III. Kiss patience till we rise with her. The night
And silence are for any business fit.

I will embrace humiliation like
My filthy shirt, but yet, if I survive,
Pay back the duke of Guise in coins of blood.

Exeunt Henry III, Catherine de Medici, and Gonzaga

Act 5. Scene 3. A street in Paris.
1588

Enter the shoemaker and the tinker

Shoemaker. Compel and annoy.

Tinker. Convey the wealthy from the world.

Shoemaker. They skip, they jump.

Tinker. Those who survive will find some hot days dark
In noble people's blood.

Shoemaker. Here's one of them.

Enter Jean-Louis de La Valette

Tinker. Are you of the king's party?

Valette. And mine. (he shoots the tinker

Tinker. O, I am hit!

Shoemaker. Ha?

Exit de La Valette, enter Crudmore and Turpin

Crudmore. In every street, hear the authentic voice
Of tragedy. Both high and low resound

In diapasons of despair and death.
Turpin. I'm glad to play the coward on this day.

Crudmore. Can you speak, fellow?

Tinker. I'll never fatten in this world again.

Turpin. See how he sweats and glares.

Tinker. Bleeding is thirsty work. (he dies

Turpin. He faints. May he forget to die today.

Crudmore. Life with slow crutches sighs and moves away.

Shoemaker. A single friend so soon away!

Crudmore. He kisses the breast of forgetfulness.

Enter the duke of Guise and Charles of Lorraine, attended

Guise. The city has been won and mine it is.

Charles. We enter in a Louvre without a king.

Guise. New posts mine to bestow or to withhold!

Charles. The governor of the Bastille, by you

Appointed, and some others all in joy,

With praises thank you everlastingly.

Guise. I do much more than help my helpful friends:

I hurt my enemies, who should thank me,

Because thanks to my care, not one of them

Now suffer in this world.

Charles. None better, brother, by Christ's blood approved.

Guise. Some die, some are transformed unwillingly

To friends, most beat their pillows in their sleep.

Charles. Some have a king forgotten in these frays.

The present eye the present man attends.

Guise. The frightened king negotiates and fears.

Charles. The duke of Epernon, who once held hands

With majesty disgraced, has run away,

Pushed off as governor of Normandy

And admiral of France on your advice.

Guise. Who is that white man some mourn darksomenly?

Charles. No doubt a Catholic hurt in our cause.

Turpin. The frost is warm next to this piece of flesh.

Guise. A mass and honored burial!

Crudmore. O, true, a mass of earth is all he has.

Turpin. I will pronounce his eulogy, and then

Perhaps obtain his shoes for summer months.

Exeunt Crudmore, Turpin, and the shoemaker bearing the tinker

Guise. Onward to Blois, where I will greet a king

And ply him to my will.

Charles. Will you, unknown to fear, court danger still?

Guise. She is a wife who promised to obey.

Charles. Discard that whore. To Lyon I must go.

To an affrighted king and queen you are

As welcome as the day to murderers.

Guise. Tut, brother, tut. There is no king in France,

Except a man asleep on cotton balls.

I doze in hell until I earn a crown.

Exeunt the Guise and Charles, attended

Act 5. Scene 4. The king's castle at
Blois. 1588

Enter above King Henry III and
Catherine de Medici

Henry III. I'll plan a murder none
will soon forget.

Catherine. Ha, is this wise? Their
league is well beloved.

Henry III. I will hear mass and
then devise a scene
Of treason witches never dreamt
about,

Which should save France from
worse calamities.

Hear, mother, hear: I wish to be a
king.

A lewd negotiator with the Guise
And Calvinists is not and never
was.

A king I'll be or die, I promise
you.

Catherine. I have crossed and re-
crossed on all non-roads
Of France for Christ, from south-
east to north-west,
Smiled willingly at hostile rebel
heads

For peace and our advantage, and
is this

My only recompense for these
travails?

Henry III. What fool will follow
virtue long despised?

A woman is most potent with her
tongue,

But yet to argue with Navarre, to
plead

With treason's scarfaced child of
woe and death!

How have we fared in this? Chased
from the Louvre

Like serfs from mighty
households!

Catherine. The Guise! The point
where blessed religion's shoe
Most pinches, to the halting of
our plots.

Henry III. The Guise can swallow
many houses down,
To leave us naked in a heathen
wind.

Catherine. Forced to attack our
friends while we possess
So many popeless enemies of
truth!

The anger of Latona's offspring
never fell

So monstrously on boasting
Niobe.

O, sick! May an old woman's
miseries

Heave proud the Guise into the
lowest house

Sin plunges lofty sinners on this
earth.

I have become an empty music
box,

Bereft of speeches apt to please a
king.

Henry III. In Venus' temple have I
laughed or sung.

Now watch a subtle Vulcan in his
net

Ensnare a traitor to religion's pact
Of promised love between all
Christian lands.

Catherine. Well cut. Now you must sew.

Exit Catherine the Medici and enter two guardsmen

Henry III. Repeat again how bad a man the Guise

Has been, now is, will be, then blacken all

Conjectures with improbabilities,
So that his solid figure may become

A pencilled lerry easy to deface.

1 Guard. A king once fought the Protestants with friends.

2 Guard. A king once reigned in Paris.

Henry III. More fuel to my hate.

Enter the duke of Guise

How, unattended, duke?

Guise. Who is the Guise? A coward beggar slave,

Or one who forces kings to sigh and yield

Against their will? In private study rooms

Adjoining royal chambers let us talk.

Henry III. Ascend to royalty: we are for you.

Guise. Well said. The Guise will not step down again.

Exit the Guise

Henry III. He'll never crumple bedsheets in this world.

Such an unheard-of murder may set off

Inside my Louvre a keg of murderous

And universal powder. What of that?

The one may be, the other is. Prepare.

Re-enter above the duke of Guise

Guise. I should resign as your lieutenant-general.

Henry III. Agreed. A traitor may resign his post.

Guise. Base traitors to a kingly traitor are

Allowed and just to all the commoners.

Henry III. Take hold of him.

Guise. Ha, slave! Where is my brother cardinal?

Henry III. On bloody knees prepared to follow you.

Guise. A king and so unkingly?

Henry III. A king at last with power. Stab the duke

Into the center of a traitor's heart.

(The guardsmen stab the Guise

Guise. O! O! I hear no music. (he dies

Henry III. His brother cardinal we'll ship to hell

With blasted sails. Let him in torment dance

On pikes of his own escort till I come.

1 Guard. We will oblige, my liege.

Henry III. Arrest the duke's son,
too, but spare his life.

2 Guard. My liege, he's caught.

Henry III. In the meantime, to help
religion's cause,
I will with Mayenne and Navarre
debate.

Exeunt Henry III and guardsmen
bearing the Guise

Act 5. Scene 5. The king's castle at
Plessis-les-Tours. 1589

Enter Ludovico Gonzaga and Jean-
Louis de La Valette

Gonzaga. Since the defeat of their
armada on
Large-bellied English waters in one
meal,
Their eighty vessels salted and
prepared
With fifteen thousand dead to
season it,
We may yet breathe awhile, from
Spanish sway
Released, France unsubordinated
still.

Valette. May we remain so ever
from their spells.

Gonzaga. The king has written to
Charles of Lorraine.
Charles of Lorraine is not to be
appeased.

Valette. The king is vehemently
and with tears
Of rage cried out against by
moderates.

We hear of Paris riots of such
scope
That few with money dare to enter
it.

Enter King Henry III

Henry III. My mother's dead. A
king may thereby rise
The brighter in his hopeful
subjects' eyes
From her red clouds unburdened.
No good deed
But as a stranger's hated to the
end!

Gonzaga. Despised by the most
hateful.

Henry III. The parliament of Paris
has drawn up
A charge of murder on their
rightful king.
I will at once join forces with
Navarre
In open war against their league
and state.

Where is our former execration?

Gonzaga. In the adjoining
chamber.

Henry III. Admit the king. We
totter should he fail.

Gonzaga. At once, my liege.

Exeunt Gonzaga and de La Valette,
enter the king of Navarre

Navarre. A foe may stand and yet
with kindness be
Received in a king's palace by the
fire
Of a new-risen day.

Henry III. You are Navarre, our loving brother king.

Navarre. Say what Navarre must do to earn the more
Such welcome kindness from the king of France.

Henry III. Against Charles of Lorraine, hot brother to

The Guise, raise arms, heap infamy, kill friends,

Help enemies: this must be shaped and fixed,

Or else be hated by a king of wrath.

Navarre. Clasp arms and hands on friendship long delayed.

Henry III. Two kings kiss gently at Plessis-les-Tours.

Navarre. The worse for Charles and hateful factions' spite.

Henry III. Hay in the rack for horses, swords in sheaths

For men! Such promises of loyalty
Are bits and trappings that will bear us on.

Do Protestants own charters from our saints

To cog and mesh with traitors? I think not.

Two kings rule on a chessboard, set to take

With our white army spurning at the false

Entire ranks of pawns and bishops, when

Each king holds true. If I die in this fray

And if you choose aright religion's course,

The crown of France is yours.
Reflect on that.

Exeunt Henry III and Navarre

Act 5. Scene 6. A street in Paris.
1589

Enter a water-carrier and a barrel-maker

Water-carrier. Those for whom I once carried water, I drown.

Barrel-maker. I put in coffins those I served with storing drink.

Water-carrier. I bring to houses no water but torches instead.

Barrel-maker. No wine in my barrels except men's blood.

Water-carrier. Will you join our religious procession, to mar, deface, murder, dispossess?

Barrel-maker. Gladly and with renewed hope in humankind.

Water-carrier. Some ceremony here! Extinguish my candle.

Barrel-maker. So may a king expire.

Enter Crudmore and Turpin carrying a heavy bag

Ha! Some gain while we attempt not to lose.

Turpin. Here's some good achieved.

Crudmore. While Rome quaked at the coming of Ceasar's rebel army, beasts abandoned forest lairs to roam with citizens. But

why need we wolves when
uncontrolled man wanders freely?

Turpin. Right. I knew these civil
jars would do us good.

Barrel-maker. What do you carry,
sirs?

Turpin. Candlesticks and gold
coins, books against submission
to tyrants and some jewels. Let us
be anything, rotted meat and
bones hanging from rusty hooks,
rather than dying poor a second
time.

Crudmore. A prelude to money
and hope.

Turpin. Look, father, a white man
who blackens men's bodies.

Water-carrier. The duke of
Mayenne will restore the right
religion.

Barrel-maker. The duke of
Mayenne will destroy the false
religion.

Enter Charles of Lorraine,
attended with soldiers

Charles. The people speak with
wisdom, sign assured
That only goodness rises from this
strife.

Water-carrier. A second Guise!

Barrel-maker. A newer Guise to
the despair of Huguenots!

Charles. May the king, false as any
Protestant,

Under your curses droop without
resource.

For Henry's younger brother, of
the Guise

Avenger, it pertains to act as head
Of our religious league. Tracts are
dispersed.

The Sorbonne says it is a holy
deed

And full of piety to kill a king.

I will add more. A pope's bull is
declared,

To free the cardinal of Bourbon
and

The archbishop of Lyon, or else
die

In excommunication. Henry, king

In sinning only, reads his high
command.

A pope's involved. The king no
more directs

His cheerful sodomies, but wears
a coat

Of mail to satisfy a Paris crowd,

For otherwise, he will inside his
Louvre

Smoke in the blood of friends and
family.

Barrel-maker. A second Guise for
the extermination of Protestants!

Charles. Infected blood I'll
swallow if we shun

To beat a king back to his joyless
bed

Of joy.

Exeunt Charles, the water-carrier,
the barrel-maker, and soldiers,
enter Jacques Clément

Turpin. Look, father, a white man
who blackens men's souls.

Jacques. Why do you say so, son?
Is not a Jacobin the truest son of

the Church, one who by the eyes and by the ears hooks sinners otherwise destined to sink unconsciously into the stupid realm, nothing but sighs and roaring, no sweetness except to be honeyed in the muck of scared ones, housed by tenants whose rent is loss of flesh and blood to lusty turnspits, roasting arms and legs as often as we cut nails?

Turpin. Certainly he is.

Jacques. Does not the Church love the poor?

Turpin. Too much, for without doubt her prosperity keeps me as I am.

Jacques. In no manner as you are. Are you no thief? What bag are you holding? Stolen goods from the deceased?

Turpin. As true as I am I.

Jacques. A Dominican monk can like a white hound easily sniff out rich wares. You must return these cheerfully.

Turpin. Ha? But oh, reflect a little, monk beyond all measure monkish: their owners' mouths, stuffed with turf, can never reclaim such worthwhile goods.

Jacques. Are they not stolen nonetheless? Do not dead people leave regretfully behind to their willing sorrow living sons, daughters, mothers, fathers, uncles, aunts, great-aunts, together with sons-in-laws and daughters-in-law and more perhaps, who probably have a far

more justifiable claim to this property than you can ever produce in a court of law?

Turpin. True. We cheat people of their rightful prize.

Jacques. Then you must give back these goods to me. I'll discover their owners and cede the items to them.

Turpin. What if the owners are richer than I am?

Jacques. An irrelevant and irreverent notion, son! Objects legally belong to their possessors. Poverty gives you no honest claim to other persons' properties.

Turpin. No?

Jacques. Who ever heard of honest filching? At no period and in no country has human society condoned stealing. A thief is unwelcome in every land, at any time.

Turpin. I regret that.

Jacques. You should rejoice in it. Let us return to the beginning, to the initial philosophic banquet noted scholars in every age have joyfully tasted, even to gourmandizing, as if you were first son or pupil of deeply searching Socrates: is not goodness good?

Turpin. Not if I starve by it.

Jacques. Primordial error of irreligious inconsideration! I tell you truly: though pinched Erisichton-like in stringy throes of starvation, you are not allowed to rob.

Turpin. I would be wise to quit this dialogue rather than my life.

Jacques. Defy Mammon's burdensome sack by burying it in my arms.

Crudmore. Not to any monk impudently pretending to a knowledge we cannot see or he can understand.

Jacques. Unfortunate son of an unfortunate father! Will you feast on merchandise that is not yours to covet, much less hold?

Turpin. Yes, dancing all night with Bordeaux' best and naked firecrackers.

Jacques. You fiddle towards damnation. I see two hungry ants feeding in a bag of refuse, whose top the unobserving servant ties up, and all has suddenly been transformed to a darkness perfect to fatten in and choke.

Crudmore. I recognize your Lethean mouth, dullness, forgetting half the sentence before it is completed.

Marked impudence of these religious beards,
Who bluster to impose their dreams on us!

Jacques. May God's eye of punishment find you bare in street or forest, in court or field, suspended above you always like a sword, wider, darker, cleaner, and sharper than Damocles' in terror.

Exit Jacques

Turpin. You have drawn them, father, exactly as they miserably are, domineering slaves who can in no fashion serve the commonalty.

Exeunt Crudmore and Turpin

Act 5. Scene 7. The king's castle at Saint Cloud. 1589

Enter King Henry III and two guardsmen

Henry III. I will confess to nothing. Should a king

Not enter Paris if he wishes? Ha!

I should. Fetch me a chaplain, heaven's door

Without the key, with Mammon's gold-bar locked.

1 Guard. We will, my liege.

Henry III. O, wait awhile. Should you go in or stay?

Remembered faults! Have I done well? They say

In Paris men who prey on weakness thrive.

Must I be blamed? Should I have kissed the Guise

For flicking off my crown? I'll take Louise

By the hand, walk in forests to conceive-

Our ground is barren. O, a punished thief

Is happier. France is of succession robbed.

1 Guard. My good liege, do you wander?.

Henry III. Infertile, dazed,
infertile!

I Guard. Your majesty, a monk
approaches here.

Henry III. O! Bid him enter and
speak well of me.

Enter Jacques Clément

I Guard. Approach, consoling
friar.

Henry III. Fall on your knees, king.

I Guard. Should we not search the
monk?

Henry III. King, fall on unrepenting
head.

Jacques. The duke of Guise once
wore a cloth of gold,
But now he wears a coat of green;
The duke of Guise commanded
men of gold,
Now all men's servants tread his
muddy face.

Henry III. Behold the great
example of the world,
The proud, the valiant, and the
over-bold,
Forever vanished in a puff of
breath.

A king's command has done it.

Jacques. A king's command has
chopped religion's head.

Henry III. His wax is spent and
smoky honor stinks.

Jacques. The lodestar of our
firmament, damp cloth
To blot out heretics: is he quite
gone?

Henry III. Demolished kingdoms
were his flags of peace.

Jacques. Our temple has become a
naked man

Aflame, his flesh with vilest
daggers torn

And lusting.

Henry III. Give him love-lies-a-
bleeding.

Jacques. Fair-weather atheist,
captured easily

While strutting happily beneath
the sun!

Henry III. A happy sleep seduces
piety.

Jacques. You are to blame if men
in Paris sin.

Henry III. One fewer sinner have I
pushed away.

Jacques. A false friend is a rich
mat covering
A rotten hole.

Henry III. Great men have always
greatly been disgraced.

I am my own apocrypha, unread.

Even my truths are lies.

Jacques. Repent.

Henry III. My apple rotting on a
growing branch!

Jacques. Atone or die.

Henry III. When poor men die,
friends do not notice it.

Jacques. Will crime stand, ever
boasting? Mere man kills

The Guise and does he smile and
shrug at it?

Henry III. A man is cured of
wounds, but never praise.

Jacques. Ha! Is your mind at ease?

Henry III. The fumes of Phlegeton
are purer.

Jacques. I have met many devils:
 Far-from-God, Forgot-Christ,
 Shredder-of-Gospel Pages, Happy
 Negligence, Lazy Presumption,
 Atheist Trap, all of them cheerful
 and pleasant, whose breath I
 shake away.

Henry III. Men moan; the moon
 returns.

Jacques. The sun shines brightly
 in the night of crimes.

Show signs of faith, create a
 wonder, God!

Henry III. Upturning eyeballs,
 friar? Wishing for
 Imagined marvels that astonish
 fools?

Jacques. Faith owns a dagger, still
 too cool and neat.

(Jacques stabs the king

Am I invisible? God needs no man
 to defend him.

I Guard. Hack him to fragments.

(The guardsmen kill Jacques

Wished-for demise! We could have
 searched the fool.

Consider our offense, for some
 will say

The monk should have been
 questioned. Raise the dead,

Attorney of our loyalty and faith.-

Refused, and rightly so. Let us
 instead

Submit to questioning, agree, and
 live.

Exeunt guardsmen bearing King
 Henry III and Jacques